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Feeling Lad Culture

mapping the affective construction of students' subjectivity in relation to Laddism in Higher Education

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Feeling Lad Culture: Mapping the Affective Construction of Students' Subjectivity in Relation to Laddism in Higher Education

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Lad culture has been much talked about as an element of British Higher Education (HE). Lad culture, represented through a range of practices, from heavy alcohol consumption to banter, reproduces itself in University campuses in a multiplicity of ways. However, for many researchers it includes the common denominators of homosociality and, in varying degrees, sexism, misogyny, racism and homophobia. For many students, then, lad culture emerges as an ever-present threatening feeling in HE spaces, therefore initiating wider cultural panic over students' safety and sexual lives, as well as, often, an accountability that locates responsibility for their own welfare back on the student.

Academic accounts of lad culture in HE have emphasised their relationship with hegemonic masculinity, as a theory that explains how some forms of masculinity maintain dominance, while other men are marginalised and femininity is repudiated. Emerging largely from this theory, literature has documented the way lad culture is performed and reproduced at different levels of education. I locate my work within this field. However, I also suggest that less attention has been paid to students who might be marginalised or otherwise underrepresented in concerns about lad culture. Furthermore, while research has broadly documented young women's and men's accounts of lad culture at University, there has been few who have attempted to read these experiences through the lens of affect.

This thesis explores the affective fabric of lad culture and the ways it shapes the students' construction of subjectivity and negotiations of agency. Developing a feminist affective methodology underpinned by an intersectional approach to lad culture, this thesis analyses discourses drawn by 5 different groups of students drawing on data collected using the method of cooperative inquiry. The thesis concludes by arguing students made sense of lad culture and their subject position within it in ways that disrupt the figure of the passive victim when dealing with instances of harassment and assault. This thesis brings methodological and theoretical contributions to the field of feminist research. Specific theoretical contributions are made in the analysis through identifying ways of making sense of 'sticky atmospheres' and 'laddish mis/recognition'. Nevertheless, the participants' voices are the most crucial contribution, providing the opportunity to understand how lad culture *affects* them – *how it feels* – in their everyday lives.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"I feel that there're should be an entirely separate emotion that's just a reaction to lad culture."
(Dan, LGBTQIA+ Society participant)

I first came into contact with lad culture in 2014. In September of that year, I started my Erasmus programme at Coventry University. During this time, parties and social nighttime activities were frequent and they normally took place within the spaces of pubs and clubs. I became very exposed to the British nightlife, from bar crawls to club-based events. A consequence of this was the inevitable exposure to lad culture. At the time, I was not aware of the concept, but I could start to identify what I thought it consisted of: predatory behaviours, in varying degrees, drunkenness and outright misogyny. I first came into contact with lad culture in nighttime spaces. However, I quickly begun to recognise lad culture in other spaces, such as the classrooms, the street, the University canteen. It was present in other more covert forms, through sexist jokes, general entitlement and an underlying assumption of superiority by men on campus. It was everywhere, and it surrounded me. It felt overwhelming, but also weirdly normal. There was a normalcy to it that unsettled me.

After my Erasmus, I moved back to Madrid to complete my undergraduate studies. And I realised, despite sexism and misogyny being present in Spanish society, lad culture was different. In Spain, we do not have a word for 'lad culture', we see it as part of the overall sexism that shapes our society. Despite this being true in the UK as well, lad culture is different, at least, I argue. The fact that it has a specific denomination in English gives it a certain feeling of membership, something that is exclusive. This intrigued me and I kept thinking about lad culture for a while. This intensified upon my return to Coventry to pursue my MA. My fascination with the topic made me carry out an auto-ethnographic exploration of lad culture as part of my final dissertation. This changed my perspective on it. Having to reflect on my own experiences and subject position shifted my fascination towards anger, frustration, indignation. I felt a lot during the dissertation. I became aware of the many abusive and sexually threatening situations I had had to navigate within the context of lad culture. What could have been a moment of closure at the end of the dissertation turned into a continuation. I had only explored a very limited account of lad culture and I was eager to know more about it and, with this, to humbly attempt to contribute ways of challenging it. For this, I needed to look at the socio-cultural framework that shaped the reproduction of lad culture in HE.

Lad culture blossoms in British University campuses. With a mixture of misogyny, racism and homophobia, lad culture emerges as a reoccurring problem for students within Higher Education. But what does the concept of 'lad culture' mean and what does it encompass? The term 'lad culture' is used to describe a set of practices and behaviours based on a 'pack mentality', a homosociality that, in different degrees, endorses sexist, misogynistic, homophobic and racist behaviours, and in its most extreme manifestations, sexual violence (Phipps and Young 2013; 2015b).

In this thesis, I use the term 'lad culture' as it is the generic term used popularly to refer to these shared types of behaviours. However, in using this terminology, I recognise it as a flawed term for different reasons. First, the term 'lad culture' can create the impression of a specific culture shared and reproduced by lads, which I argue against inasmuch as the behaviours and practices enacted within it are articulations of misogyny and sexism, and sometimes racism and homophobia. I do not consider this to form a distinct culture, but rather, a further ramification of discriminatory behaviours. Second, and in connection to the first concern, speaking of 'lad culture' can be interpreted as an identity-model group, where the men that participate in it actively identify as 'lads'. Drawing on the participants responses (later introduced in the analysis chapters), lad culture did not emerge as a fixed identity, rather, it emerged as fluid: there was a liquidity to it that unsettled the idea of it being an identity. In this regard, lad culture was depicted as a discourse of masculinity, given form in a multiplicity of ways by a wide range of different men. Third, while it is true the term 'lad culture' is often used in a male typology fashion, drawing on the stereotypes of who the lads are (e.g. rugby players, heavy drinkers), the participants shed light on the diversity of the men that reproduce laddish behaviours, therefore presenting lad culture as exceeding its cultural stereotypical definitions. Taking this into account, I consider lad culture to be masculinity discourse that seems potentially available to be taken up by different men. On this last point, I argue, while lad culture might transcend certain stereotypes, it still remains a socio-cultural phenomenon located within British and Irish[1] contexts. Even though the term "lad culture" originated as a British term (Willis 1977), the concept has been explored and applied within the context of

[1] I have decided not to label it an Anglophobe phenomenon as I think what is thought to be the equivalent of lad culture in the United States, the so-called "frat culture" is quite distinct inasmuch as it is rooted in class privilege and symbolic capital, something lad culture is not necessarily underpinned by.

Ireland (Ging 2005; 2009). Despite the universality of some laddish behaviours (misogyny, homophobia, etc.), I claim the male socialization that frames the reproduction of lad culture at universities specifically locates it in British/Irish societies. This, I argue, is rooted in extreme alcohol consumption which is used by men to assert their masculinity (de Visser and Smith 2007). While alcohol drinking and masculinity are also interrelated in other countries, the drinking style differs from their European counterparts. The UK has been categorised as a "dry" drinking culture, rather than "wet" (Savic et. al. 2016). Countries labelled as dry (e.g. UK, Ireland, USA) are characterised by less frequent but heavier drinking, higher levels of drunkenness and social disruption and more restrictive control structures than wet countries (e.g. Spain, Italy, France) (Room and Mitchell 1972). It is this particular engagement with alcohol of countries such as the UK and Ireland that provide, in my opinion, the basis for the reproduction of lad culture in these socio-cultural contexts.

The concept of lad culture has often been associated with the idea of 'toxic masculinity' and has been further characterised through notions of University sports clubs, excessive alcohol consumption and 'banter' (Phipps and Young 2013), which has helped the creation of the stereotypical figure of the University lad. The seriousness of the situation has gained the attention of media and various institutional bodies and organisations, for example the National Union of Students (NUS), who have called for a national summit to address the problem posed by the prevailing sexism within HE education. This problem is said to be thriving (Phipps 2014), increasing (Deacon 2014) and to be everywhere (Wilcox 2014). The media's take on lad culture is characterised by a pessimistic sentiment that seems to blame the apparent rise of laddish behaviours on anti-intellectual 'boozy' students (Deacon 2014; Sanghani 2014).

A significant amount of media portrayals of lad culture aligns it with extreme alcohol drinking and nightclub contexts. For example, a story featured in the Huffington Post (Sherriff 2015) reported the sexualised underpinnings of a University nightclub party where the students were asked to simulate sexual acts on the club's stage to win a place on a sports tour in Croatia. The crowd of students started to repeatedly chant 'slag' at one of the women participating in the performance, which resulted in her leaving in tears. Another example is reported by The Independent (Troup-Buchanan 2013), where a group of alcohol-induced male hockey players from Stirling University chanted misogynistic songs on a bus. This alignment of lad culture with drinking culture has been criticised for conflating the problem to general social ills and feeding moral panics about excessive drinking and "raunchy" behaviour (Phipps 2015; Wilcox

2014). Phipps (2015) argues that conflating lad culture with drinking culture situates lad culture as an external problem to Universities. This externalisation of the problem works for Universities, as they make drinking the scapegoat of their problems, therefore ignoring the social factors that shape and enable the reproduction of lad culture on campuses (e.g. increasing neoliberalisation of HE [Phipps 2014; Phipps and Young 2015b], classism, racism, misogyny and homophobia). This results in Universities avoiding taking responsibility. Furthering this, the collapsing of laddish behaviours and drinking cultures disregards some laddish manifestations that are not located within alcohol-fuelled environments. For example, a group of students at the University of Warwick was found to have engaged in misogynistic and racist conversations through a WhatsApp group where they often shared rape, anti-Semitic and racist jokes (Busby 2018c). The men involved, who were initially banned from campus for 10 years, later saw this suspension reduced to 1 year by the University of Warwick. This change in the institution's response caused the university to come under heavy media scrutiny, particularly taken up in social media under the hashtag #shameonyouwarwick, therefore pointing to the visibility of online feminist activism in responding to rape culture (Keller, Mendes and Ringrose 2016; Mendes, Keller and Ringrose 2019; Mendes, Ringrose and Keller 2018).

Taking the above into consideration, lad culture appears to be articulated through different practices, in various settings and by multiple, yet somewhat specific, types of male student. Previous research on lad culture has explored this phenomenon particularly through two angles: primary and secondary schools (Jackson 2002; 2003; 2006; 2010) and HE students (Jackson and Dempster 2009; Jackson, Dempster and Pollard 2015; Jackson and Sundaram 2018; Dempster 2009; 2011; Dempster and Jackson 2014; Phipps 2017a; 2017b; Phipps and Young 2013; 2015a; 2015b; Phipps, Ringrose, Renold and Jackson 2018). This extensive body of research has been crucial for understanding the emergence and reproduction of laddishness in contemporary Britain. This work has analysed lad culture as a heterogeneous form: from analysing the lads in educational and teaching contexts, to exploring how it interlinks with the neoliberalisation of HE. In this thesis, I build on this very important work and contribute to contemporary studies on lad culture by addressing a gap in the field. First, previous studies on lad culture have been largely focused on the experiences of white, British, cis-heterosexual male and female students. In my thesis, I have applied an intersectional approach, therefore illuminating a multiplicity of accounts of lad culture produced by students from different genders, races, sexualities and ethnicities. Second, an account of what lad culture feels like seems to be missing in prior research. In this thesis, I map the affective fabric of lad culture to

provide an original understanding of gender power relations and sexism within the context of Higher Education.

Consequently, I locate my research within the landscape of affect studies. In my research, I provide a discursive-affective account of lad culture, employing a feminist affective methodology (see Chapter 3 for a full discussion). This allows me to explore the affective life of lad culture. The contemporary field of affect research is characterised by its polarised understanding of affect (see Chapter 3 for a full discussion). For some authors, affect refers exclusively to the non-representational, the pre-personal and the pre-cognitive, whereas for others, affect is aligned with the discursive, the intersubjective and the emotional. I situate my interpretation of affect as standing in the middle, following my understanding of affect studies as a continuum where a multiplicity of readings of the concept occur. My take on affect pays attention to its discursive and virtual components. In doing this, I explore the psychosocial dimensions of affect, which enables me to produce an account of lad culture that pays attention to the affective interaction of misogyny and sexism. In looking at affect in this research, I also explore its interrelationship with agency and subjectivity, and its manifestations in particular spaces and through specific masculinities.

In this thesis, I am interested in how lad culture *affects* students in Higher Education. I respond to the need in lad culture studies to explore the ways its affective fabric shapes students' subjectivity by asking pertinent questions. The questions are: Is there a lad culture in the university and if so, what does it feel like? What are the ways in which the affective dimensions of lad culture inform and shape Higher Education students' subjectivity? How do students come to enact agency and negotiate their position within the affective context of lad culture? And how do spaces shape both the reproduction of lad culture and the ways in which it is experienced by the students? To address these questions this thesis analyses the discursive-affective understandings of lad culture drawn by five different groups of HE students. I explore what lad culture might mean for these students' affective subjectivities by using data collected through the method of cooperative inquiry.

This thesis takes steps in furthering the understanding of lad culture in higher educational contexts. In this relatively small yet productive area of research, lad culture has been understood as a thing that *does* something to people, causing effects such as violence and sexual harassment, or the fear of both. This results in a dyadic reading of lad culture and the people

who it effects. While the research in this thesis is necessarily part of this lineage, I also hold that in some of these analyses, lad culture is perceived as an active agent. This, in my opinion, is an implicit outcome of the work that can result in a rendering of the people affected by it as inactive, not submissive, but not in action either. This type of construction of the students at the periphery of lad culture forecloses any inquiry into how they negotiate their own position and subjectivity in this environment. It results in the exclusion of students' agentic capacities when dealing with the lads. In this research, I highlight this implicit outcome as something that needs work, that needs to be made explicit. To offer an alternative understanding of lad culture and the relationships it creates, I open up discussions of agency as distributed across people, situations and spaces and in close relationship with affect.

The thesis takes imaginative approaches through the developing of a feminist affective methodology that engages with cultural analysis, as well as first-person accounts of the participants' understandings of lad culture. I borrow from a range of disciplines including cultural studies, psychology, sociology and human geography to examine the students' sense-making of lad culture with regards to subjectivity, culture and identity. In doing this, I provide a unique interpretation of affect as circumscribed in the social and contextual (Wetherell 2012). I draw on the work of, among others, Ahmed, Fraser, Benjamin and Ben Anderson to explain the affective fabric of lad culture and the students' (dis)engagement with it. In applying these ideas to the students' discussions of emotions, space, resistance and masculinities, the thesis offers new ways of understanding lad culture and its affects. I theorise the affective entanglements of lad culture and examine the socio-cultural conditions that enable the reproduction of laddish behaviours as they emerged in the data; and the students' discursive-affective understanding of lad culture and of their own subject position within it.

1.1 ORGANISING THE THESIS

In Chapter 2 'Meeting Lad Culture', I introduce the concept of 'lad culture' as a historical construct, and locate it within contemporary debates on men and masculinities, particularly drawing attention to recent debates on hegemonic and inclusive masculinities. Drawing on this, I outline the socio-cultural discourses that shape my use of lad culture in this thesis, which are neoliberalism and postfeminism. I define neoliberalism as a political-economic rationality that, expanding in different domains of life, constitutes a form of governance grounded on ideas of individuality, autonomy and self-enterprise, and postfeminism as a gendered form of

neoliberalism (Gill and Scharff 2011). I also provide some critical points of the concept of 'lad culture' that inform my own conceptualisation of the term. The critical points I make are concerned with the cultural differences underpinning the reproduction of lad culture, the limiting effect of the term when attempting to name sexism outside the University environment, and the often-disregarded question concerning those differently positioned by lad culture, whose experiences might nevertheless be crucial.

In Chapter 3 'Feeling this? Affect, Agency and Feminist Methodology', I discuss the methodological underpinnings of the thesis by drawing on affect theory, feminist debates on agency, and central issues concerned with feminist methodology. From this, I outline the feminist affective methodology that I have developed and employed in this research to map the affective fabric of lad culture and explore the participants' construction of subjectivity and negotiations of agency. Within this feminist affective frame, I understand affect as both social and discursive *and* non-representational and virtual. In this way, I pay attention to the psychosocial dimensions of affect, where I bring together different elements that shape affect and affective relations. I then overview my feminist methodological approach. Developing a feminist 'naked methodology' (Lather 2007) allows me to account for both my own situatedness in the research and the partiality of my knowledge. Doing this, I take accountability of the power dynamics informing the research and explore my (failed) attempt to de-centre my power within it. In the final part of the chapter, I draw on pivotal discussions on the concept of agency to develop my own use of it in this thesis. I conceptualise agency within the affective, considering how affect shapes agency. I see agency as non-individualistic, intersubjective and folding into discourse. However, I am also careful not to read agency in a dichotomised fashion underpinned by colonialist and Western values of "having/not having" agency. I see agency on a spectrum of agentic capacities (Coole 2005), distributed among bodies, situations and spaces, and through attachments and negotiations (Mahmood 2005).

Chapter 4. 'Methodological Implications: Data, Voices and Tensions' explores how this methodology was put into practice in the data collection process and analysis. In the first part of the chapter, I introduce the different participant groups and provide a detailed account of the participatory cooperative inquiry method employed to collect the data. I also map the difficulties encountered in using cooperative inquiry regarding the impossibility of overthrowing my authority as a researcher, and the silences in the data, especially regarding the participants' (lack of) discussion on race issues. I also discuss the concept of

intersectionality, and explain how it has shaped my research holistically, from its initial outlining to the data collection. In the second part, I introduce the tensions that shaped the analysis process when attempting at mapping affect and agency in a non-individualistic and non-dichotomised way. I explain my approach to analysis through the idea of mapping and present the data as an assemblage involving stories, voices, agentic capacities and affects that I plug in together. To finish, I outline the structure of the analysis, where I explore the discursive-affective understanding of lad culture by the participants. The analysis is structured in three chapters that explore the data of three different participant groups. I also include two smaller chapters that 'interrupt' the narrative and contribute to theoretical developments.

The following chapters, therefore, carry out the interpretative work of enacting this mapping. Chapter 5: '"*I can feel him staring*": Race, Laddish Mechanisms and Women's Reclamation of Spaces' explores how a group of BAME, female MA students created a distant position to lad culture, and were thus able to analyse its workings, which I refer to as 'laddish mechanisms'. These laddish mechanisms are: laddish laughter and laddish gaze. I explore this drawing on Foucault and inquire into how laughter and humour is used to reproduce gendered social hierarchies. In this chapter, the notion of space emerged as crucial in the discussions. Lad culture was perceived as occupying certain spaces, and therefore, affecting the participants' location within them. I explore the women's negotiation of space looking at the strategies they developed to manage the tensions present. These strategies centred on moving as means of avoidance of lad culture and as a way to reclaim their right to inhabit these spaces. I particularly explore the latter through the figure of the 'strong black woman'.

Chapter 6: 'Cutting In: Sticky Atmospheres' looks across the data and develops the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' by bringing together Ahmed's idea of 'sticky affects' and Ben Anderson's theorisation of 'affective atmosphere'. In developing the notion of 'sticky atmospheres' I analyse the spatial qualities of affect and consequently provide an understanding of the socio-spatial workings of lad culture. In doing this, I see lad culture as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered phenomenon. I look at the different affective relations that occur in different spaces to map the ways lad culture mobilises affect that, in turn, shapes space and the interactions that take place therein.

Chapter 7: '"*I'm strong so I kicked him with my Doc. Martens"*: Laddish Masquerade and Navigation of Sticky Laddish Nighttime Spaces' explores the participants of a Student Union

Gender Society. The chapter applies some of the ideas worked through in the previous chapter in relation to sticky atmospheres. I also develop the idea of the laddish masquerade borrowing from McRobbie's (2009) notion of the postfeminist masquerade and Connell's theorisation of hegemonic masculinity. I argue laddish masquerade appears as establishing a hyper-masculine template of identity, which functions to re-secure masculine hegemony in society.

Chapter 8: 'Cutting In: Laddish Mis/Recognition' looks at the ways participants across the data engaged in processes of mis/recognition within the context of lad culture. I draw on Benjamin's psychoanalytic theories and Fraser's Marxist-inspired perspective to develop a 'laddish mis/recognition' to look at how different institutional, psychic and cultural mechanisms shape the construction of subjectivity. Understanding recognition as being granted the capability to participate as a full member of society in social life, I argue that, within a lad culture that is often underpinned by sexist, homophobic and racist attitudes, the participants of this research would be misrecognised. In this chapter, hence, I pay attention to this type of misrecognition; however, I also look at the moments in which misrecognition is self-directed, or emerges in moments of intersubjective contradiction, when one's identity is challenged and, consequently, in conflict.

Chapter 9: *'"It genuinely makes me fear for my life"*: Navigating and Negotiating Lad Culture as LGBTQIA+' explores the variety of discursive-affective ways LGBTQIA+ students made sense of lad culture. Discourses of class and sexuality are brought into focus and analysed through the participants' stories. The chapter applies Muñoz's (1999) concept of disidentification, in conjunction to mis/recognition, to explore how the different LBGTQIA+ identities are negotiated within the affective environment of lad culture. Disidentification refers to a process where disidentificatory identities fail to be interpellated due to falling outside of dominant ideologies of sex and race. I explore these identity tensions by looking at the idea of 'compulsory heterogenderism' (Nicolazzo, 2017), through which diverse and non-normative gendered identities are rendered unintelligible. In this chapter, such a concept helps me detangle the participants' accounts of sex, gender and lad culture.

Each group-focused chapter analysis finishes by considering the ways the groups propose stopping lad culture within University campuses. In line with my approach throughout the thesis, driven by my own feminist positioning and desire to tackle sexism and misogyny in my own academic work, the conclusions of this thesis return again to this issue. I conclude the

thesis suggesting two specific routes for future research in this emerging field of study. First, I suggest a collaboration of lad culture research with the field of human geography to explore how geographies frame gender relations and interact with race, gender and sexuality in creating social hierarchies. Second, I propose more research is needed on lad culture that focuses on the experiences of people of colour and their navigation of HE laddish spaces, particularly in a social context where their presence in HE environments is concurrently celebrated, hindered and dismissed. This would provide novel insights into the workings of racism within lad culture.

Chapter 2: Meeting Lad Culture

In the following chapter, I offer an account of lad culture that I engage with in this thesis in order to situate my work within this field of research. I first review the field of masculinity studies, particularly exploring the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 1995), inclusive masculinity theory (Anderson 2009), and the criticisms both received. I also review the ideas of 'toxic masculinity' and 'rape culture', and how it interacts with lad culture. This positions the thesis in relation to contemporary debates on masculinities. Second, I engage critically with the concept of lad culture. I explore the limitations in its use in previous literature regarding the construction of the concept 'lad culture' and its focus on masculinity, and outline some critical points that inform my own use of the term. These include: the role cultural differences play in the reproduction of lad culture; the limitation of the concept in naming sexism outside of the specific University life-stage; and the under-addressed question of alternative experiences of lad culture. In doing this, I complicate lad culture as a socio-cultural term and problematize its focus in research to suggest an alternative account for its study that de-centres masculinity as its primary cornerstone. In continuing my review of lad culture as a constructed idea, I turn to consider the socio-cultural context and mediated history of lad culture. Starting with an earlier articulation of lad culture dating back to the 1950's and the 1990's concept of the 'new lad', I map the different historical notions of lad culture and the emergence of changing 'lad' subjectivities. Considering the vast amount of literature on this topic, I pay special attention to a number of pivotal texts that I believe are representative of the main ideas.

I then outline two cultural forces that I believe shape lad culture in today's cultural context. These are neoliberalism and postfeminism. In this discussion, I consider the ways they underpin contemporary articulations of lad culture, as well as how they shape the experiences of those affected by it. The latter directly informs the issues and research questions interrogated by this project. Finally, I review contemporary literature on lad culture within the context of British Higher Education.

2.1 MASCULINITY(IES) ISSUES

Masculinity refers to those practices, behaviours and languages that exist in particular socio-cultural locations which are usually associated with men and therefore, culturally characterized

as not feminine (Itulua-Abumere 2013). Within the field of the sociology of masculinity, Whitehead and Barrett (2001) identify three different theoretical waves of masculinity theory dating back to 1950's. They argue the first wave developed the sex role paradigm and applied it to the idea of masculinity, in order to consider the problems men faced in attempting to comply with dominant expectations of male performance ideals. During this period, there was an emphasis in establishing masculinity as a social construct dependent on socialisation that was limiting and potentially damaging for men regarding both their physical and psychological health (Edwards 2006). The second wave emerged in the 80's out of critical engagement with the first one. The sex role paradigm was thought to be theoretically constrained in its understanding of masculinity in a singular fashion, embodied by the figure of the white, Western, middle-class man (Edwards 2006). The paradigm was further criticised from a political angle, inasmuch as it seemed to suggest the existence of equality between the sexes, hence ignoring questions of power within gender relations (Carrigan, Connell and Lee 1985). In this regard, the second wave within masculinity studies became concerned with how male power structured dominant ways of doing masculinity. It is within this second wave context where Connell (1995) develops her concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', to which I turn below. Lastly, the third wave was heavily influenced by post-modern theory and feminist post-structuralism, and was primarily concerned with discursive practices, identity, agency and resistance, and notions of performativity and normativity (Edwards 2006; Whitehead and Barrett 2001). A general interest within this period was (and still is) the question of representation of masculinity in relation to wider social debates on the changeability of masculine identities (Edwards 2006; Whitehead and Barrett 2001).

Connell's theory of masculinity, appearing within the second phase of masculinity theory, has been lauded as the most influential and important contribution in the field of men and masculinity studies (Wedgwood 2009). For the purposes of this chapter, I will only be focusing on Connell's concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', rather than each of the waves, given its theoretical prominence. This is followed by a review on its reception and criticisms within its field of research.

Connell theorised the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' in multiple pieces of research, nevertheless it is important to note the pivotal role her book *Masculinities* (1995) played in elaborating the concept. In her research, Connell introduced the term hegemonic masculinity in relation to the making of masculinities (Connell 1983), labour politics (1982) and in her

systematic framework and theory of gender (1987). The term draws on Gramsci's concept of 'cultural hegemony', which considers how power relations underpin social classes in societies (Connell 1995). Gramsci's (1971[1999]) notion of 'hegemony' characterizes a position of dominance that is achieved and realised in general agreement rather than through the use of force, despite it being supported by force. Thus, the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' emerged to describe a type of dominant masculine identity that allows men to maintain their domination over women and other men who are seen as performing an inferior type of masculinity (Connell 1995). In this respect, hegemonic masculinity positions itself as rejecting homosexuality and femininity, since the latter is rendered as the opposite to masculinity, and gayness seen as neighbouring femininity (Connell 1995).

In this regard, hegemonic masculinity works to create a hierarchy of masculinities among men, where the ones who do not abide by traditional masculine norms (e.g. physical strength, assertiveness, toughness, antifemininity [Gordon et al. 2013]) are rendered as inferior and therefore, subordinate to the dominant masculine archetype. This hierarchy, Connell and Messerschmidt argue in their review of the theory (2005), does not signify dominance based on force, but rather, it signifies a "pattern of hegemony" where "cultural consent, discursive centrality, institutionalization, and the marginalization or delegitimation of alternatives are widely documented features of socially dominant masculinities" (846). This highlights the unforceful nature of hegemonic masculinity as its dominance is based on the (re)production of models and symbols of masculinity that have important social authority (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

A crucial aspect of hegemonic masculinity theory is that it cannot be achieved; it is a "fantasy of masculinity" (Plester 2015: 541), an "impossible fiction" (Renold 2004: 249) of ideal manhood (Connell 1995). In fact, Connell (1995) argues the number of men who practice the ideal hegemonic pattern of masculinity may be small, and thus the hegemony is hierarchic. Despite this, hegemonic masculinity emerges as normative for men, hence embodying the "most honoured way of being a man" in current Western societies (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). Connell (1995) claims, even if the number of men performing hegemonic masculinity is limited, the majority of men do benefit from the hegemony since they profit from what she calls the "patriarchal dividend" (79). She describes this as the general benefit gained by the subordination of women. The patriarchal dividend structures a distinct form of relationship between groups of men. It is the men who do not embody hegemonic masculinity

yet benefit from it that Connell (1995: 79) calls “complicit”. Complicit masculinities enjoy a higher status in the hegemonic hierarchy than marginalised masculinities. The latter ones are described by Connell (1995) in terms of both race and sexuality, such as gay and/or black men. Marginalised masculinities, despite what the name might indicate, are crucial for the sustainability of the hegemonic hierarchy, since they are contingent to the authorization of the dominant group’s hegemony.

However, it is worth noting that the hegemonic hierarchy is not self-reproducing. In fact, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue, it involves the constant policing of men to uphold the pattern of hegemony. But, this pattern is not stable, fixed or limited to one specific performance. It is “historically mobile” (Connell 1995: 77), manifold and therefore, negotiated through time inasmuch as masculinities are constructed practices. For modern masculinities, therefore, it is necessary to adjust to new socio-cultural contexts, but also to attend to rising tensions in gender relations. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) claim a pattern of masculinity is to be considered hegemonic as long as it offers a solution to these tensions. One of the solutions to these arising tensions is through the production of masculine politics that underscore and secure hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995), such as violence. For example, Connell (1995) explains the greater pressure for gender equality and women’s advancement generates a response in the form of hegemonic representations of men in films, with figures such as Silvestre Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger, where men could demonstrate forms of “plain violence” (215; also see Tasker [1993] for a discussion of this).

Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity has reconceptualised how we understand the construction of masculinity as a relational, cultural and social process and has shed light on the formation of relationships between men, underpinned by tension, dominance and complicity. However, the theory has received some criticisms from fellow masculinity scholars, which I explore below.

2.1.1 HEGEMONY TO INCLUSIVITY?

Critical engagement with hegemonic masculinity theory has been proliferous and has come from multiple fields of study: psychoanalysis, criminology, psychology, etc. The theoretical concept has faced criticisms on a number of fronts. Some of these include: hegemonic masculinity creates a false unity of identity for men (Collier 1998; McInness 1998; Moller

2007); it is an ambiguous term with discrepant applications (Martin 1998; Wetherell and Edley 1999; Whitehead 1998; 2002); it reifies the problem of power and masculinity as it overlooks the political and material implications masculinity has for women (McMahon 1993) and ignores the institutionalisation of gender inequalities as a result of masculine power (Holter 1997; 2003); it poses a problem to the masculine subject inasmuch as the individual is not accounted for (Wetherell and Edley 1999; Whitehead 2002); and, finally, it simplifies gender relations without considering the historicity of gender (Demetriou 2001).

It is beyond of the scope of this thesis to examine each of these criticisms in depth[2]. However, I would like to bring attention to a specific theory within men and masculinity research, which criticises hegemonic masculinity theory as not accounting for changing articulations of masculinity in recent times. Consequently, this theory rejects the understanding of hegemonic masculinity as the dominant form of masculinity in Western societies. Instead, the focus is on more 'inclusive' masculinities.

Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT) was first used by Eric Anderson (2005) to describe the appearance of a distinct masculine archetype that subverts hegemonic masculine principles in the context of a decrease in homophobia and misogyny. This was prompted by a number of studies (Anderson 2002; 2005; 2008a; 2008b Anderson and McGuire 2010) that accounted for the seemingly increased acceptance of gay men in traditional men's groups (e.g. rugby teams). Regarding this, Anderson (2009) proposed IMT to account for the changing relationships between young men and masculinities. Distancing himself from the concept of hegemonic masculinity, as it was seen as not considering the dynamic underpinnings of male homosocial relationships, Anderson (2009) examines how the apparent decrease in homohysteria shapes masculinity, making it more inclusive.

Anderson (2009: 7) describes homohysteria as "the fear of being homosexualized", which leads men to police their behaviours in homohysteric ways that enable them to align themselves with (compulsory) heterosexuality. Drawing on Connell (1987; 1995), Anderson (2009) argues homophobia was used to stratify men in relation their compliance with the "heteromasculine hegemonic mode of dominance" (95). Proving their heterosexual identity through behaviours

[2] For a careful consideration of each of these critical points by Connell, please refer to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 836-845).

coded as heterosexual (acting aggressively, presenting themselves as unemotional, etc.) was crucial for men to attain masculine capital in homohysteric societies.

However, Anderson (2009) and Anderson and McCormack (2018) argue we are witnessing a significant decline in homophobia and homohysteria, which will signify the end of dominant hegemonic masculinity in favour of softer masculinities, resulting in the blurring of the masculinity/femininity dichotomy. In this regard, Anderson (2011: 570-71) argues, IMT "supersedes hegemonic masculinity by explaining the stratification of men alongside their social dynamics in times of lower homophobia". This logic is also underscored by McCormack (2011: 85) who explains that, despite the persistence of social hierarchies in relation to masculinity, hegemony disappears in what he calls "hierarchy without hegemony". For example, men in sports contexts are still structured in a hierarchical way but are less likely to exclude gay men. Without homophobia, Anderson (2011) claims, new masculinities can emerge in a less traditionally hierarchical way, therefore existing on more equal horizontal terms.

The positivity shed on contemporary masculinity by IMT has been met with criticisms. I agree with some of the problems highlighted within the theory, and I outline these below with reference to O'Neill (2015) and de Boise's (2015) critical work on IMT and Ging's (2017) work on the 'manosphere' and the Red Pill ideology. I also consider how the concept of toxic masculinity and current debates on rape culture could potentially reframe conversations on men adopting more 'inclusive' masculinities.

In her article, O'Neill (2015) argues IMT has put a positive spin on masculinity theory resulting in the production of an affective appeal of optimism, which facilitates the erasure of sexual politics from it. Drawing on McMahon's (1993) work on the psychologising of sexual politics within masculinity research, O'Neill claims IMT appropriates feminist object-relations theory. Object-relations theory is a psychoanalytic theory that explores the formation of the psyche in relation to objects in the child's environment (Morris 2011). McMahon (1993) argues pioneering work in feminist object-relations theory, such as Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), has been taken up by masculinity scholars to explicate masculine identity and (mis)behaviour, ranging from absent fathers to rape. O'Neill suggests this pattern is seen in Anderson's (2009) work, where she argues he selectively and incorrectly engages with certain feminist writings to explore the relationships between men without accounting for the

political underpinnings and struggles of gender relations. Instead, O'Neill explains, Anderson focuses on the cost of traditional masculinity for men in a "historically amnesic" way that disregards previous sociological work preoccupied with the burdens of masculinity (2015: 108).

O'Neill furthers her criticism of IMT by arguing it builds on and reproduces a rhetoric of social change that is linear and progressive, and does not consider possible shifts in patriarchal relations or the creation of new forms of inequality. This rhetoric, O'Neill explains, renders hegemonic masculinity as outdated, along with homophobia. In this sense, IMT credits the apparent decrease in homohysteria to young men, thus overlooking the work carried out by feminist activists. Rendering the decrease of homophobia as symptomatic of the emergence of inclusive masculinities, O'Neill claims Anderson (2009) exaggerates the role of homophobia in the formation of masculinity and, consequently, leaves unexplored the relationship between heterosexuality and masculinity. To finish her critique, O'Neill brings together postfeminism and IMT, as she argues both theoretical frameworks engage in a dismissal of feminism and feminist politics. In the case of IMT, O'Neill argues that both Anderson (2009) and McCormak (2012) position their theory as accounting for social change, which leads them to advocate for feminist research to be contextualised and historically located. For O'Neill, this seems to suggest feminism is out-of-date and fails to address social change. This argument, O'Neill explains, is distinctively postfeminist as it contributes to the disarticulation of feminism not by renunciation, but by rendering it as *passé*.

In his piece, de Boise (2015) shares some critical points with O'Neill, however, he also brings forward new arguments. de Boise's critical engagement with IMT can be summarized in four main points. First, he argues Anderson and McCormack conceptualise hegemonic masculinity as an archetype of a stable and fixed identity that "one can "possess"" (323), therefore misreading Connell's (1995) formulation of hegemonic masculinity as a network of unstable gendered configurations underpinned by changes in social power. Furthering this, de Boise explains his second argument, claiming that despite Connell's emphasis on describing hegemony as historically mobile, both Anderson and McCormack describe the theory as unable to account for changing articulations of masculinities in times of low homohysteria. de Boise draws on Demetriou's (2001) concept of hybridity to articulate his argument.

Demetriou's (2001) critique of hegemonic masculinity theory focuses on its failure to acknowledge the impact marginal masculinities have in the construction of hegemony. Demetriou (2001) argues hegemonic masculinity secures its hegemony through enacting a process of hybridization that appropriates elements of marginal masculinities to adapt to changes in the socio-cultural context. An example of hybridization, Demetriou argues, is the gay imagery seen in advertising, where adverts are increasingly based on the erotization and fetishization of the male body, rather than machismo or male strength. Concerning this, de Boise claims the word 'inclusive' might be a hegemonic strategy to protect the interests of privileged groups while providing the impression of social progress. Third, de Boise elaborates his argument, explaining IMT does not consider the dynamics of complicit masculinities benefiting from hegemony without actually embodying it. de Boise argues, disavowing homohysteria and homophobia might still result in an enjoyment of cultural homophobia by the 'inclusive' men. Regarding this, de Boise doubts the validity of IMT and develops his fourth criticism, arguing IMT's scope seems limited to "'sexually liberal', complicit and middle-classes" (326) and offers a reductionist view of homosexuality and its relationship with the intersections of race, inasmuch as Anderson seems to suggest both race and sexuality can be treated and explained in the same way.

Drawing on the concept of hybrid masculinities (Demetriou 2001; Bridges and Pascoe 2014), Ging (2017) furthers the criticism on IMT by exploring the articulations of online misogyny within the manosphere. Ging describes the manosphere as online men's interest communities marked by heterogeneity (with atheist, pro-gay, geeks and Christian conservatives sharing spaces) and Red-Pill-induced misogyny. The Red Pill ideology is an analogy from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, where the protagonist Neo is given the choice between taking a blue pill, meaning living a deluded life, and a red pill, meaning awakening to "life's ugly truths" (3). The Red Pill philosophy presents itself as enlightening men to the truth of feminism: its misandry and brainwashing. Ging (2017) argues the manosphere, underpinned by Red Pill ideas, englobes different articulations of masculinity (from gay men to traditionalist Christians) with a common denominator: a personal suffering narrative that positions men (including gay men) as the victims of feminism. In the manosphere, gay men and pro-gay men also participate in misogynistic online practices. Ging (2017) explores how, from their victim positions, manosphere men articulate a hybrid masculinity that both reifies and rejects hegemonic masculinity ideals through operating ideological tropes of victimhood, anti-feminist misogyny and desires to assert male hegemony. Considering this, Ging rejects Anderson's IMT as she

argues reduced societal homohysteria coexists with the reproduction of pro-gay antifeminist discourses.

Further literature and contemporary mediated debates that seem to unsettle the belief that men are adopting and reproducing more inclusive archetypes of masculinity are concerned with the ideas of toxic masculinity and rape culture. The concept of toxic masculinity has become an extremely popular expression circulating both in media and academic circles when discussing masculinity issues. Despite its popularity, its origins remain vague. While within psychoanalytic context, the term has been used to refer to men's natural tendencies regarding the need to compete and dominate (Kupers 2005). Within a sociological setting, the descriptor was firstly used in the early 1990s to explore representations of masculinity and the relationship between men and their fathers (Haider 2016). The term was also elaborated by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) who argued the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity in society could be done through men's engagement with toxic practices such as violent behaviour. Nevertheless, they accentuate toxic practices are not the defining characteristics of hegemonic articulations, inasmuch as hegemonic masculinity is reproduced through multiple configurations, also involving its distancing from toxicity. This reflects common misunderstandings on the use of the concept of toxic masculinity, particularly within the media, as it gives the impression of a specific and demarcated masculine identity.

But what exactly is understood by toxic masculinity? Haider (2016) describes the idea through its relationship with violence, by drawing on a paper by Karner (1996), where she decpited wars as spaces for idealised masculinity that result in men's later disillusionment with violence when it does not provide the status or power expected. Within this context, Haider (2016) argues masculinity becomes constituted through violence and disenchantment, therefore providing the conditions for it to turn toxic. He says (2016: 558):

> "*When a notion of masculinity is thus structured, what happens if there is a disillusionment with violence, because it is not available, because it is being perpetrated in theatres of war far away, or because the violence engaged does not yield the results expected? What happens when this disillusionment is enhanced by a diet of social media that showcases in gruesome detail violence of elsewhere, framed according to in-group and out-group loyalties? What happens for instance, when a sense of masculinity becomes conflated with a culture, a nation, or a religion whose*

defense is mapped along gendered lines (the feminine object being sullied and in need of defense)? Under such a schema, a masculinity already constituted through violence turns toxic."

The relationship between masculinity, toxicity and violence has been heavily incorporated in media debates: from commentary on gun violence and recent shootings in the USA (Reese 2019), to conversations on the #MeToo social phenomenon, involving its capitalisation by the company 'Gillette' with its advert '*The Best Man Can Be'* aiming to tackle toxic masculinity. Contemporary mediated discussions on toxic masculinity have frequently been accompanied talks on the so-called 'rape culture' (Compaore 2018). 'Rape culture', developed by US feminists in the 70's (Peters and Besley 2019), refers to a set of beliefs that support rape and violence against women: from ideas defending men's rights, seeing violence as another fact of life, biological drives, and the belief women's enjoyment of rape and consent's blurred lines (Lazarus and Wunderlich 1975; Herman 1989; Alison, Ringrose, Renold and Jackson 2017). Media discussions on rape culture have recently witnessed an increased visibility of feminist politics, with activists from Spain, India, the US and Australia speaking against the normalisation of rape and victim-blaming discourses (Bonachera 2019; Raiva and Saliora 2018; Monchgesang 2015). The recent debates on the prevalence of rape culture and the reproduction of toxic masculinity challenges us to rethink how 'inclusive' masculinity can be in cultures where such violent masculinities still prevail.

Considering the frequent interrelationship between rape culture, toxic masculinity and lad culture in both literature and media debates, it is pertinent to briefly discuss how these different concepts interact, hence highlighting the way they overlap, but also their distinctions. Rape culture appears as a term encompassing much more macro discussions on misogyny and violence against women, while lad culture emerges, frequently, as situated in university and other educational environments, therefore existing on a more micro-level. Lad culture, as it will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 9, incorporates rape culture supportive attitudes (e.g. problematic banter, sexual competition, assault) and toxic practices (e.g. violence and intimidating behaviours). However, this does not mean that rape supporting behaviours and toxic practices are defining characteristics of lad culture. As previous literature in the topic argues, and as I will document in the upcoming analysis chapters, the reproduction of lad culture takes many forms and is enacted in a multiplicity of levels that do not always target women, people of colour or LGBTQIA+ students. In this sense, rape culture and toxic

masculinity do intersect with lad culture inasmuch as they can be co-opted in laddish practices, however they do not characterise it entirely.

So far in this chapter, I have situated my work within the field of masculinity studies. I have considered the most important contributions in this particular field of research, as well as outlined some criticisms by drawing on pertinent authors. Reviewing the state of the field of contemporary masculinity studies is imperative, as questions of masculinity and masculine identity formation are central to studying lad culture. Lad culture cannot be explored in this thesis without references to masculinity studies for two reasons. First, some of the conversations with the participants centred on the concept of masculinity and described lad culture as reproducing a specific masculine identity. For example, one of the groups in this project drew a direct relationship between lad culture and toxic masculinity (see Chapter and 9). Second, in this thesis I argue lad culture articulates hegemonic masculinity, creating a laddish masculinity that subordinates those masculinities that do not fit its hegemonic frame. Due to this, a detailed review and positioning of this research within masculinity studies is crucial. I now move onto critically examining the concept of lad culture and the ways it has been conceptualised in previous literature through problematising its focus. Then, to continue my review of the concept, I contemplate lad culture's socio-cultural and mediated origins.

2.2 PROBLEMS AND ORIGINS

The expression lad culture has become widely used both in popular mediated culture and in academic spheres. Its widely utilisation has signified the concept of lad culture has not been significantly and critically engaged with. For example, some of these questions have been left unanswered: does the reproduction of lad culture follow uniform or does it experience ramifications? Are there cultural underpinnings to lad culture? What behaviours could/couldn't and should/shouldn't be framed under the category of lad culture? In what follows, I engage with these issues, among others, to offer a critical review of the term lad culture and the ways it has been conceptualised in prior research.

2.2.1 ENGAGING CRITICALLY: PROBLEMATISING THE FOCUS

Previous literature on lad culture is crucial to understand how laddism works, is reproduced and enabled – directly or indirectly – on British university campuses. This includes exploring the mechanisms of the performance of laddishness, primarily involving sports, alcohol and

aggressiveness, and examining the social interpretations of laddism. This body of work provides us with fundamental knowledge of the workings of lad culture. With my research, I am building on this important research, and in doing so, I would like to highlight and problematise four aspects of previous literature that I aim to work on in this thesis.

The first point that I would like to highlight is that prior research has conceptualised lad culture as somewhat cohesive. Across this body of work, lad culture emerges as a rather consistent term in that, in describing laddish behaviours and practices, it portrays a homogenised interpretation of what lad culture is and/or signifies. From those accounts that present a lad culture reproduced by the stereotypical lad interested in sports, drinking and women, therefore drawing on traditional and hegemonic masculinity discourses (Dempster 2009), to those that construct it as (post)ironic, self-knowing and simply satirical (Walter 1998; Gauntlett 2002) (for a more in-depth discussion of lad culture's post-ironic trajectory, please see subsection 2.2.2 Mediated Origins: Lad Mags). Despite previous studies underlining the contradictions of its reproduction (for example, Dempster [2011] highlighting the inauthenticity of laddishness as a performance one can 'slip in' or out, or Jackson and Dempster's [2009] consideration of the strategies employed by lads to perform the 'effortless achievement'), there seems to be some limitations around the concept of lad culture regarding its cultural differences and the usefulness of the term itself.

Cultural differences shaping the reproduction of lad culture are not much accounted for in prior work. For example, while the idea of class has restricted presence in this research (Jackson, Dempster and Pollard 2015), the way race intersects with lad culture is less considered beyond its understanding as predominantly white. In this regard, an intersectional approach to lad culture that explores how different identity variables impact on its reproduction seems to be missing. In my work, I attempt to conceptualise lad culture as un-cohesive, heterogeneous and fragmented. This research, thus, acknowledges the multiplicity of articulations of lad culture through for example, accounting for how class and race form and shape laddishness. With regards to the point of age, this brings me to my second critical argument.

The term 'lad culture' or 'laddism' and its somewhat monolithic use in research also overlooks life stage problems of the denomination, as pointed out by Nichols (2018). In her research, Nichols (2018) attempts at "moving past ideas of laddism" (73) presented in previous literature

that characterised it as a phase in young men's lives that fades once they grow up. In view of this, Nichols (2018) argues men's interactions with laddish behaviours are diverse and are constantly shifting and adapting to different life stages and age contexts. Nevertheless, in past research, lad culture has been often associated with specific practices carried out by boys at primary and secondary schools (Jackson 2002; 2006; 2010; Jackson and Dempster 2009) and HE (Dempster 2009; 2011; Dempster and Jackson 2014; Jackson, Dempster and Pollard 2015; Jackson and Sundaram 2018; Phipps 2017; Phipps and Young 2015a; 2015b; Phipps, Ringrose, Renold and Jackson 2018). This recurrent correlation, although precise in a lot of cases, can result in the impossibility to name sexism outside of the contexts of education. However, simultaneously, and in order to complicate the argument further, if we were to render all sexism and misogyny as lad culture, the critical edge of the concepts like sexism and misogyny could get erased. Meanwhile, lad culture and laddism, as terms, are not used to denominate other forms of sexism and misogyny (e.g. structural sexism, such as the gender pay gap, would be difficult to define through the prisim of 'lad culture'). It could be argued that these terms are problematic inasmuch as they appear to hide articulations of sexism that fall out of the stereotypical young men performance. Is the sexism displayed by a man in his 50's, or older, not performing laddism? Is there an age limit to laddism, and if so, where do we draw the line? But most importantly, should we draw one?

My third critical point also relates to lad culture's wide spectrum of attitudes, behaviours and practices within this age group. Previous studies have depicted lad culture as involving a variety of sexist and misogynistic practices. Consequently, lad culture seems to have developed into being too broad of a term. From banter and mockery to rape, lad culture appears to encompass a multiplicity of different behaviours, all of them problematic in varying degrees. The problem of this 'one size fits all' lexicon is that it may result in the trivialisation of the more serious behaviours, such as sexual assault and rape. By labelling all these behaviours under the umbrella of 'lad culture', it seems we are giving the same amount of importance and concern to extremely varying practices (a misogynistic joke, assault). Furthermore, by categorising the more severe attitudes such as rape under this frame, it could be argued a justification of these behaviours is given: it's not sexual violence, it's lad culture. In doing this, it could also be argued we are erasing the link to sexual violence that occurs outside of University circles and therefore, marking them as essentially different, where one of them appears as more justifiable.

To address these last two concerns, in my thesis, I explore what the participants interpreted by the term lad culture and the ways in which they made sense of the figure of the 'lad' himself. In examining who and how they thought a lad was, I identified that 'lad' emerged as a subject position, as a 'laddish masquerade' (see Chapter 7) that could potentially be taken up by men regardless of age. Hence, being a lad does not refer to an authentic reflection of someone's identity, but it is a fluid construction of performance that results in the reconfiguration of men's identities. In the literature, lad culture has been constructed as enacted by university-aged men. However, men's engagement with laddish behaviours extends over this age limit and outside of education. For example, the websites 'The Lad Bible' and 'Uni Lad' have an average readership age comprised between 16-35 (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019a), therefore going beyond the age of a typical university student. For this reason, in my thesis, I am not giving the term 'lad culture' ontological security (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019a). I problematize the term as allowing misogyny and sexism to continue its reproduction outside education, however without recourse to the terminology of 'lad culture'.

My fourth argument concerns the almost exclusive centring of masculinity in previous research. In past literature, there is a tendency to research lad culture from the point of view of masculinity itself. In this thesis, I view masculinity as important but not central. The lads' point of view on the subject, as well as complicit men's opinions, have been accounted for and explored: the experiences of being masculine have been well documented in prior research. Nevertheless, the experiences of not being masculine are not often examined. How is it to live in the context of laddish masculinity from the point of view of non-lads? In which ways do they make sense of masculinity and laddism? Not considering these questions creates a gap in the literature regarding how we understand lad culture as interpreted by men who may be far from embracing laddish masculinity. In this study, I address this gap in previous research. My contribution to this literature is to illuminate the experiences that have not been the focus in prior research. I do this by incorporating an intersectional approach and centring male-identifying people who struggle with masculinity and describe themselves as not particularly masculine. In doing this in my thesis, I aim to further the socio-cultural understanding of lad culture as also experienced and encountered by non-laddish men, feminist-identifying men, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The gaps discussed above have shaped this study and research process. Drawing on previous literature, addressing the gaps discussed above and furthering the study on lad culture within

HE environments, the research questions that frame the thesis are the following: Is there a lad culture in the university and if so, what does it feel like? What are the ways in which the affective dimensions of lad culture inform and shape Higher Education students' subjectivity? How do students come to enact agency and negotiate their position within the affective context of lad culture? And how do spaces shape both the reproduction of lad culture and how it is experienced by the students?

Having evaluated previous literature's use and formulation of the concept of lad culture, I now turn to provide a historical and media account that considers the origins of this concept as located in popular media culture. I do this in order to provide an in-depth understanding of lad culture that encompasses a critical conceptualisation of it and contemplates its mediated inception.

2.2.2 MEDIATED ORIGINS: LAD MAGS

The concept of 'lad culture' has been used as a descriptor for a particular type of male behaviour and specific articulations of masculinity. This is reflected in media representations of lad culture. Having surveyed the field of masculinity studies in relation to lad culture, I now move on to consider the role media has played in the emergence of laddish identities. Lad culture as a term is not fixed and bound to a particular definition. The concept has been redefined and reconceptualised since it was first coined. Both historically and today, its use fits with and represents the socio-cultural context it exists within.

The origins of the term 'lad culture' are inextricably linked to different media forms. The descriptor 'laddish' dates back to 1950's, when Playboy magazine used it to describe white adolescent heterosexual masculinity (Beynon 2002), with incorporations of misogyny and homophobia (Eden 2017). The emergence of the term 'laddish' and its articulation of misogynistic ideas could be interpreted as a response to the cultural context it appeared in, a time where issues regarding sexuality were gaining visibility as a result of socio-cultural changes in British society. The term reappeared in the 90's with the rise of the so-called 'lad mags' (Growse 2012). One of the first researchers to intervene in this particular area and, therefore, becoming a pioneer in the study of the implications of lad mags was Whelehan (2000). In her research, Whelehan (2000) applies Faludi's (1992) backlash against feminism paradigm and argues lad mags enact an "old revival of patriarchy" (5) that directly challenges

feminist gains and calls for social change. In this regard, Whelehan states that 'the lad' represented in these magazines defensively asserts his masculinity through an embodiment of male power against feminist challenges.

Growse (2012) identifies *Loaded* and *FHM* as the two most successful lad mags of that time, selling hundreds of thousands of copies per issue. The use of the expression 'lad' in the 90's could be associated to the growing media popularity of ideas around girl power, used by pop groups such as the *Spice Girls* and TV shows such as *The Powerpuff Girls* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. The popularity of lad mags, Growse (2012) explains, could be attributed to their representational trope of the 'weak man'. The weak man (or as Growse [2012: 24] suggests, the "useless bloke") refers to the comedic representation of men as incompetent, unable to cope and generally incapable of keeping a girlfriend (Arlidge 2001). Despite the multitude of critics this type of representation faced – from blaming the feminist movement and feminist advances in society (for example, women's increased access to employment), to attributing it to the increasing 'feminization' of society – Growse (2012) indicates both *Loaded* and *FHM* successfully exploited this particular male representation and found a broad audience to sell it to. These magazines redefined the 'weak man' trope and constructed a reworked masculinity underpinned by working-class hedonism against middle-class decency, political correctness and values of self-restraint (Growse 2012).

Benwell (2003, 2007) argues the particular form of masculinity celebrated in lad mags presented itself as antagonist to the feminist-friendly and middle-class 'new man' identity forged in 1980's fashion magazines such as *Esquire*, *GQ* and *Arena*. Gill (2003) identifies the socio-cultural context that provided the supporting environment for the new man to appear, including: feminist and social movements, popular psychology, retail culture and pink economy/gay liberation. Gill (2003) argues that feminism and other social movements (anti-racism, sexual liberation etc.) challenged the construction of masculinity as a universal and unified identity, and opened up discussions about power, gender and culture that enabled a revisioning of gender relations. Similarly, popular psychology throughout the 70's helped flourish the idea of the self-actualised person (Maslow 1970 in Gill 2003), which moved away from traditional masculine constructs and emphasised a masculinity that was in touch with its feelings. The new man also became a target for retailing culture and consumerism, with clothes and fashion becoming a signifier of class and success, hence enabling the 'trying on' of identities through attire. This increasing preoccupation with one's appearance, together with

the gay liberation movement, Gill (2003) argues, contributed to the vicissitude of mediated representations of masculinity. Particularly, Gill (2003) notes the rising representation of eroticized men in popular culture, which enabled the thwarting of the heteronormative politics of looking based on the exclusive sexualisation of women by men. It was within this context that the script of masculinity was reworked and the new man appeared as an emotional person and aware of wider social inequalities.

This middle-class new man masculinity of the 80's endured further changes, accompanied by a shift in media representation in the 90's and 00's that seemed to attract wide readership and that pushed back against the perception of political correctness of the 80's new man. The masculinity branded in the magazines *Loaded* and *FHM*, and in their successors *Nuts* and *Zoo*, appealed to an audience from all social classes, therefore becoming symbolic of an emerging laddish culture based on homosociality, the seeking of pleasure, alcohol drinking and an obsession with women's bodies (Benwell 2007; Gill 2003; García-Favaro and Gill 2016). The representation of the funny, goofy weak man in the magazines was underlined by comedy, and was thus celebrated in popular culture (Negra 2006). An Observer report summed lad mags message as "Don't take us seriously. We're blokes and we're useless" (Adams 2005 in Growse 2012: 5). Exploring the ironic underpinnings of lad mags, Whelehan (2000) identifies the complex and often more sophisticated ways these magazines reproduce retro-sexist ideas under the guise of sarcasm. In her opinion, the portrayal of men as simple and sarcastically useless was motivated by a desire to avoid the complexity of gender equality. Growse (2012) associates this playing with the idea of the 'hopeless man' in media culture to the articulation of the wider cultural phenomenon of 'new laddism' at the centre of "complex contemporary heterosexual British masculinities" (6).

The concept of the 'new lad' grew out of men lifestyle magazines (Godfrey 2010). This new lad, Benwell (2007) argues, was typically ethnically white, and embodied a return to traditional values of masculinity based on sexism, homophobia and the exclusivity of male friendship. Gill (2003) states, the dominant way of conceptualising the rising of the new lad is as a form of backlash against feminism (Faludi 1991), a recuperation that rearticulates a "nostalgic revival of old patriarchy" and reaffirms fixed notions of gender roles and relations (Whelehan 2000: 5). In this sense, the new lad was constructed as rejecting the change in gender relations through an aggressive redefinition of masculinity. In this regard, the evolution of the concept of lad culture could be interpreted as articulating multiple form of responses to the socio-

cultural context that framed it: from its origins in Playboy magazine as talking back to the changes in British society in the 50's regarding sexuality, to the 90's re-emergence as countering the postfeminist overblown mantras of girl power and the 80's overly correct new man.

However, some accounts position the 'backlash' reading of the mediated new lad as restrictive. Reviewing Whelehan's (2000) work, Gauntlett (2002) argues her analysis of media portrayals of lad culture remains superficial, one-dimensional and somewhat catastrophical, inasmuch as her assumption on how these magazines shape men's identities is overly pessimistic and lacks a deeper understanding on the different masculinities that are projected in them. Jackson, Brooks and Stevenson (1999, 2001) argue the rise of lad mags and the figure of the new lad could be understood as an act of rebellion against masculinity discourses that position men as the responsible provider and the jobholder, which could also be interpreted as responding to the neoliberal restructuring of the economy (I document this in greater detail the following sub-section), through the use of irony and self-deprecating humour that forged lads as comical and not serious. Concurrently, the new lad was also immersed in self-reflection.

Benwell (2007) explains a key characteristic of the new lad was its reflexivity about his life and condition, which she argues, made him exempt from criticism. For example, the sitcom *Peep Show* (BBC 2003-2015) uses the male protagonists' self-reflexivity as a way to avoid outside criticism, as this is already done by the characters themselves. With this, we witness a significant reworking of masculinity that moves away from traditionalist masculine images of the breadwinner man to embrace a playful, ironic and anti-aspirational lad (Gill 2013). In this regard, and since the 90's, the figure of lad has evolved incorporation introspection and irony in its articulation. This has been interpreted, particularly by Gauntlett (2002) and Walter (1998), as an attempt enacted by young men to adjust to the ever-changing landscape of contemporary masculinities, underpinned by its involvement in a humorous fight with feminism. This seems to position lad culture's evolution as occurring in close self-conscious dialogue with feminism (Ging 2005). The post-ironic trajectory of lad culture, enacted through the notions of the 'weak man' as mentioned earlier, has been grounded on a postfeminist knowing wink – we make sexist jokes, yet in being aware of this, we are not sexist, we just "should know better" (Ging 2005). In reproducing retro-sexist ideas knowingly, their sexism becomes undone in its reassurance that they are aware of and able to laugh at the socio-cultural

sexism and misogyny framing contemporary gender relations (Evans and Riley 2015; Gill 2007; McRobbie 2009).

Above, I have examined the popular media culture that contributed to the emergence of laddish representations of masculinity. I now turn to contemporary literature on lad culture which develops a conceptualisation of lad culture paying attention to the social and cultural factors that underpin it. This more recent turn provides a solid framework of reference for the concept of lad culture and its participants in the thesis.

2.2.3 LADS IN CRISIS

The study of lad culture in academia has theorised laddish behaviours as shaped by the socio-cultural context that frames them. In his ethnographic work on education and socialization, Willis (1977) first used the term 'lad' to depict white, working-class British young men, therefore confining the term to a particular group within British society. In more recent literature, the descriptors 'lad' and 'lad culture' have opened up to encompass men from different socio-economic backgrounds. In relation to this, Francis (1999) argues the term underwent modifications pertinent to its meaning during the 90's, where so-called 'laddish values' in the media targeted white male audiences, regardless of their class (see discussion above). This resulted in the popularization of lad culture amongst middle-class men and a redefinition of 'lad', from describing boys and young men, to take on a definition around the idea of a man "being one of the lads" (357). Francis (1999) explains, the idea of 'lad' in the 90's:

> "*evokes a young, exclusively male, group, and the hedonistic practices popularly associated with such groups (for example, 'having a laugh', alcohol consumption, disruptive behaviour, objectifying women, and an interest in pastimes and subjects constructed as masculine)*." (357).

The notion of lads as laid back, 'having a laugh' and being, to different levels, problematic in their behaviour, has been contextualised within broader socio-cultural debates. These debates claim masculinity is in crisis as current changes in societal structure, economic environment and gender relations are dismantling what it is to be a man (Ingram and Waller 2014). Within this context, talks about a crisis of masculinity have emerged (Beynon 2002; Horrocks 1994;

Kimmel 2010; McInness 1998). This so-called 'crisis' is prompted by an ever-changing environment where traditional masculine industrial labour is being replaced by third-sector jobs where men no longer learn to labour, but learn to serve (Willis 1977; McDowell 2000). This economic restructuring of the labour market that displaced manufacturing jobs for customer-facing service sector jobs has contributed to the blurring of the gendered division of labour where men were constructed as the breadwinners (McDowell 2000; Dixon 1997).

Not only shaped by the changes in the economic and labour sector, the crisis of masculinity has also been connected to the rising of ethnic minority groups and, particularly, women in society (Swanson 2013; Kimmel 2010). Kimmel (2010: 18) explains the entry of women into the labour market is seen by some men as an "invasion", a sentiment he argues is not new. Historically, men's resistance to women's equality in the public sphere was founded on a courteous protectionism, through which women were seen as too fragile and delicate to work (Kimmel 2010). In recent times, attitudes have changed and men no longer show chivalry, but "*defensive resistance*" (Kimmel 2010: 18, emphasis in original). Within this context, women have gone from being too frail to not being good enough (Kimmel 2010). In this light, the disassemble of what once was a male economy has left men in crisis, stripped of their all-male environments, and angry. Yet, as Modleski (1991) suggests, "however much male subjectivity may be 'in crisis'… we need to consider the extent to which male power is actually consolidated through cycles of crisis and resolution, whereby men ultimately deal with the threat of female power by incorporating it" (p.7).

One example of the reconstitution of male power is how the crisis of masculinity has played out in education. Concerns over boys' academic achievement against the apparent rising of female success have positioned young men as struggling (Epstein et al. 1998). The notion of the 'underachieving boys' has contributed to the construction of a mediated moral panic that views young men's alleged educational failure as prompted by young women's prospering (Burgess et al. 2004; Francis 1999; 2006; Griffin 2000; Jackson 2002; Ringrose 2007; Phipps and Young 2013). The contributing factors to the apparent decline in boys' performance at school are varied: some attribute it to the feminization of teaching (Carrington and McPhee 2008), the lack of male role models (Bleach 1998; Drudy 2008), shifts in employment (Salisbury and Jackson 1996) and GCSE seen as favouring girls (Palmén 2011). Nevertheless, a frequent explanation refers to laddish cultures and macho behaviours (Francis 1999; 2000; Jackson 2002; 2003; Younger et al. 2005). The attribution of boys' underachievement to their

behaviour in class has been echoed in political spheres, with Stephen Byers and David Blunkett, then School Standards Minister and Secretary of the State for Education and Employment in the UK correspondingly, citing laddish cultures and laddish anti-school attitudes as the main cause for their low performances (Jackson 2002).

In this light, Younger et al. (2005) explain the adoption of laddish behaviours as being related to the accessing of a certain 'macho' status in the class. Attaining this status locates boys in a position of power where they can take pride in their disengagement or lower performance. But why would boys not only engage in, but also pride themselves in their apparent laddish underachievement? Jackson (2002) interprets laddish behaviour related to boys' decline in academic success through social psychological theories of self-worth, particularly drawing on Covington's (1992; 1998) self-worth motivation theory. Covington (1992; 1998) argues within the context of Western societies and education systems, academic abilities are seen as highly prised commodities, which makes them inextricably related to feelings of self-worth. Self-worth in education is thus determined by the perception of one's ability and success, which is signalled by grades. However, Covington argues, the competitive life of the education system translates in the impossibility of guaranteeing all students' success; some fail. Consequently, Covington states some students prefer to avoid failure by disengaging to protect their self-worth, rather than attempting to succeed.

Drawing on this, Jackson (2002: 42) recognises two techniques whereby self-worth is protected: avoiding failure, which she argues, is not always feasible; and avoiding the "*implications*" of failure (emphasis in original). Within the latter, Jackson (2002) identifies four of the main strategies developed: 1) procrastination; 2) deliberate withdrawal and refusal of academic work; 3) effortless achievement; and 4) misbehaviour. Jackson (2002) draws parallels between these strategies and boys' adoption of laddish behaviours at school, as these techniques are underpinned by ideas of laddish 'coolness' (particularly related to effortless achievement and withdrawal), which can be coded through hegemonic masculinity. On this last point, Jackson (2002) argues laddish self-protection strategies act to reinforce hegemonic masculinities. In this regard, Jackson (2002) explains, self-worth protection strategies perform a twofold function: protection of self-worth against the hurtful connotations of bad academic achievement, and against the damaging implications of not performing 'appropriate' forms of masculinity, which render effort and work as feminine qualities (2002: 43; 2003). Jackson (2002; 2003) states, the construction of laddish cool masculinity, underpinned by a multiplicity

of strategies (from aptitude-based ones to attitude-based), serves to develop self-worth techniques of protection. These protection techniques work to shift the possibility of being rendered an academic failure in favour of been seen as just lacking the effort.

Debates on the crisis of masculinity in relation to laddish behaviours have sometimes developed into mediated concerns for the seemingly rising levels of laddishness among girls, or so-called 'ladettes'. Jackson (2006) and Jackson and Tinkler (2007) explain the term 'ladette' has emerged out of media discussions that decpict the apparent rise in 'troublesome' behaviour among young women and girls as a direct consequence to their increased equality with men in modern British society. Ladette as a concept refers to a set of gender transgressive behaviours shared by young (usually white) women who "enter territories traditionally regarded as 'masculine'" (Jackson 2006a: 353). These behaviours often involve alcohol drinking, disruptive practices (e.g. within schools – talking back to teachers, outside schools – fighting) and being overly open about their (hetero)sexuality and sexual encounters (Jackson 2006a; Jackson and Tinkler 2007). The raising visibility of ladettes in the media has been accompanied by moral panic discourses about women's decency, respectability and social class (Skeggs 2005). Despite the commonality between lads and ladettes, and in spite of ladettes being rendered as worse than lads, I argue women's participation in ladette cultures, borrowing from Jackson (2006a: 339), is characterised by its lack of dominance within gender relations due to masculine hegemony. While lads exert their masculine hegemonic power in a number of ways (e.g. banter, aggression), ladettes are altogether prevented from accessing social power due to their gender. In this regard, the participation and reproduction of laddishness by different genders, whilst sharing similar attitudes and practices, remains significantly different as the social implications of lads and ladettes are vastly distinct.

In the above, I have overviewed contemporary discourses on masculinity by drawing on pertinent literature in the field. I have located lad culture within the field of masculinity studies, and further contextualised it within socio-cultural and mediated discourses that underscore the 'battle of the sexes' premise (Gill 2011) and how it affects young men and women within educational settings. These discourses are what make possible the reproduction of lad culture, enabling the re-emergence of retro-sexist behaviours to reclaim traditionally male territory. Considering this, I ask: besides the mediated representations of the lads and the 'lads in crisis' narrative, what dominant discourses shape lad culture in the present moment? What are the features and traits that characterize lad culture in HE at the moment? What attitudes are

reproduced by lad culture presently? In an attempt to address these issues, in what follows, I locate current articulations of lad culture within the context of postfeminism and neoliberalism. This context also shapes how I recognise contemporary hegemonic masculinities, contra claims of inclusivity and in favour of exploring hegemonic articulations of masculinity as located on an always-subject-to-change spectrum.

2.2.4 NEOLIBERAL AND POSTFEMINIST LAD CULTURE

Neoliberalism has been a crucial concept in contemporary feminist research to make sense of the current challenges the feminist movement faces, and also, to understand the social framework that permits the prevalence of misogynistic behaviours. Although neoliberalism as a term has been criticised for its "omnipotence" and for having been stretched "too far to be productive" (Clarke 2008: 135), it is still pertinent to explore how neoliberalism continues to shape social practices, in this case, lad culture within the context of HE spheres. But what exactly do we understand by neoliberalism? Gill and Scharff (2011:5) define neoliberalism as a "political and economic rationality" that arose predominately in the 1980's, defined through deregulation, privatization and state's relinquishment in social provision spheres. However, neoliberalism is not limited to the economic and political areas of life. They explain a neoliberal logic has expanded to different domains of life, therefore constituting a specific form of governance (Gill and Scharff 2011). This new governance reconfigures the relationship between the governing and the governed (shifting from a view of the governed as civil servants or citizens to consumers or entrepreneurs [Ong 2006]) and also redefines the act of governing itself as technical rather than political (Gill and Scharff 2011). In this regard, neoliberalism appears to be "a mobile, calculated technology for governing subjects who are constituted as self-managing, autonomous and enterprising" (Gill and Scharff 2011: 5).

This autonomous subject marks an apparent end of the working class as a community fighting for the workers' rights as a result of the embourgeoisement of society (Gorz 1982). In neoliberal times, subjects are self-produced. Fixed societies traditionally stratified by gender, location and class are said to have been eroded, giving way to contemporary socially mobile societies (Gill and Scharff 2011). The self-produced and mobile subject is underpinned by a narrative that marks people as responsible for their own destiny (Ringrose and Walkerdine 2008). Changes in the economic and labour market have accentuated this reconfiguration of the subject. For example, the increase of zero-hour contracts, the rise of austerity policies and

the spread of short-term contracts against jobs for life, to name a few, are factors that contribute to the creation of the all-responsible neoliberal subject and entrepreneurial subjectivity (Ringrose and Walkerdine 2008; Scharff 2016, Rose 1990). Scharff (2016) describes entrepreneurial subjectivity as a form of rationality through which people relate to themselves as a business, embracing and managing risks and hiding damages. Both market logics are used to understand the self, therefore suggesting a deep and constant internalization of competition (Scharff 2016). In a social context where people are held as wholly accountable for their success or failure, the self aspires to autonomy and personal fulfilment, and "interprets its reality and destiny as a matter of individual responsibility" (Rose 1990: 1).

A heavily explored area of research within the context of neoliberalism is postfeminism. Regarding the vast amount of work carried out on a postfeminist sensibility, I am focusing on a selection of texts that have shaped my view of what constitutes hegemonic masculinity in this thesis. In what would become a crucial text in feminist research, Gill (2007) describes postfeminism as a sensibility formed by multiple interrelated themes: the notion of femininity defined as a bodily property; the sexualisation of culture enacting the shift from sexual objectification to subjectification; the focus on self-surveillance and self-discipline; emphasis on empowerment, choice and individualism; the makeover paradigm; and the reappearance of natural sex difference ideas. Gill (2007) distances herself from seeing postfeminism as a backlash against feminism, as researchers such as Faludi (1991), Whelehan (2000) and Williamson (2003) have done. Instead, Gill (2007) argues postfeminism articulates a different sensibility that responds to feminism through a tendency to tangle up both feminist and anti-feminist discourses. McRobbie (2000; 2009) explains this highly complex phenomena through her idea of 'double entanglement'.

McRobbie (2000; 2009) describes 'double entanglement' as involving the co-existence of neo-conservative values regarding gender, sexuality and family life with processes of liberalisation concerning a greater diversity in domestic and sexual relations. She argues, the postfeminist double entanglement involves a 'taken-into-accountness' of feminism, which results in feminism coming undone through disarticulation (2009). McRobbie (2009) explains disarticulation as the presupposition that there is no need for feminism any longer as it is outdated. This outdated feminism is also disarticulated through a characterisation of it as fuelled with wrath and aversion to men. Within this framework, feminism becomes unfeminine and repulsive. With this hostility against feminism, McRobbie (2009) argues, the process of

disarticulation erases the possibility of female solidarity and sisterhood. This disarticulation is also accompanied by a process of displacement by a "highly conservative mode of feminine 'empowerment'" (27) achieved through active participation in consumer culture. Consequently, ideas of womanhood are reshaped and gender relations are reworked against the threat of feminism. A postfeminist sexual contract is established, where young women are constructed as privileged and modern subjects with access to education and with economic capacity. These women are autonomous and ambitious and participate in "some of the rewards of the feminine consumer culture which in turn becomes a defining feature of her citizenship and identity" (2009: 734). The figure of the modern, independent working woman re-energises female consumer culture as women become crucial agents within it. McRobbie thus defines postfeminism as a concept that takes feminism into account, only to make it appear dated and already achieved, therefore rendering feminism as no longer necessary.

Our cultural context has changed since McRobbie's significant contribution, incorporating a popular feminism that nevertheless, remains within the remit of consumerism (Banet-Weiser 2018). However, in this regard, it seems postfeminism is underpinned by gendered neoliberal sense-making of female individualism and heightened consumerism. Postfeminism therefore demonstrates the gendered nature of neoliberalism as it positions women as critical operators of both national and international (through increased mobility) economies (Harris 2004). Gill (2017: 609) describes the relationship between postfeminism and neoliberalism as:

> "*a sense-making characterized by relentless individualism, one that exculpates the institutions of patriarchal capitalism and blames women for their disadvantaged positions, that renders the intense surveillance of women's bodies normal or even desirable, that calls forth endless work on the self and that centres notions of empowerment and choice while enrolling women in ever more intense regimes of 'the perfect' (McRobbie 2015)*".

The neoliberal postfeminist woman engages, as a highly responsible subject, in constant monitoring practices to better herself. From beauty apps (Elias and Gill 2018) to self-help literature (Riley, Evans and Robson 2018), the modern postfeminist woman's subjectivity and intimate life are underpinned by neoliberal notions of governance, where ideas of self-liberation are produced in the service of control, therefore directing people to an individualism that satisfies the needs of late capitalism (Gill 2017; Riley, Evans and Robson 2018).

Considering this, I ask: how are postfeminism, neoliberalism and lad culture connected? Gill argues the new visibility of feminism, particularly through its most recent examples of the '#MeToo' and 'Time's Up' movements (Gill and Orgad 2018), is being met with misogynistic resistance, arguing that "for every uplifting account of feminist activism, there is another of misogyny" (Gill 2016: 613). Equally, Banet-Weiser (2015; 2018) states the widespread visibility of popular feminism is marked by the intensification of popular misogyny in contemporary times. In this regard, Banet-Weiser (2018) argues, popular misogyny is reactive against the perceived threat of popular feminism. It is within the context of this popular misogyny, heightened through postfeminist and neoliberal ideals, that I argue, contemporary articulations of lad culture in UK HE can be located.

Phipps (2017) and Phipps and Young (2015a, 2015b) explore the neoliberal and postfeminist underpinnings of lad culture in HE. They (2015b) argue the increasing neoliberalisation of British HE, from neoliberal systems of performance and evaluation to University rankings, is giving cue to a new morality of self-development based on dominance and marginalisation. Current institutional metrics systems such as NSS, TEF and REF[3] are evidence of the rise of neoliberal logics shaping British HE. In this way, it seems HE is being driven by a neoliberal market rationality (Ball 2012) where performative regimes of competitive individualism not only shape the University as an institution, but also students' public and intimate lives. Drawing on Phipps (2017a; 2017b) and Phipps and Young (2015a; 2015b), I explore the four ways neoliberal and postfeminist ideologies shape laddish masculinities. After this, I also reflect on how these discourses are framing the figure of the ladettes.

First, Phipps and Young (2015b) argue competitiveness is central to laddish constructions of hegemonic masculinity (see also Jackson [2010] and Dempster [2011]). However, under the rubric of lad culture, this competition has incorporated a distinct sexual dimension. Phipps and Young (2015b) illustrate this through the example of the Facebook page "Rate Your Shag", which provides a platform for people to engage in a quantification of their sexual partners. This sexualised laddish competition, Phipps and Young (2015a) argue, can be framed under contemporary 'sexualisation debates'. In exploring the sexualisation debates, the authors

[3] National Student Survey, Teaching Excellence Framework and Research Excellence framework are institutional metrics used within the context of British Higher education to measure the University's excellence within the UK HE context.

(2015a) identify two narratives: what they coined as the ‘sexual panic’ discourse that reproduces a protectionist discourse on girls and young women as passive victims of the dangers of young and promiscuous sex; and the sexual celebratory discourse, underpinned by neoliberal postfeminist values of empowerment, choice and freedom, which results in the idealisation of young women’s sexualities, therefore ignoring the socio-cultural context that shapes them. However, drawing on their data, Phipps and Young (2015a) identify their participants as not having any objection to sex itself, rather, the problem was with the sexism that often accompanied it within the context of lad culture.

The participants’ talk highlighted the (re)emergence of neoconservative notions of gender, sex and sexuality. Phipps and Young (2015a) argue, this is carried out through consumerist and competitive behaviours such as drawing sexual charts, keeping score of sexual conquests, marking women by their appearance or sexual performance and the popular “fuck a fresher” race. Within this heightened sexual competitive frame, a postfeminist narrative appeared shaping it, requiring women to constantly be “up for it” (Gill 2008: 41). In this regard, Phipps and Young (2015a) argue that lad culture emerges as articulating retro-sexist attitudes and practices and neoliberal postfeminist rationalities that not only restrict women’s sexualities and sexual expression, but also require them to be sexually available, therefore turning “sexual agency into a form of regulation” (12).

Second, Phipps (2017a) argues, one way to make sense of lad culture in both social and education spheres is through viewing it as a defence response against the postfeminist ‘battle of the sexes’ narrative that constructs young women as the ideal neoliberal subject that outperforms boys in educational settings. This understanding fits the backlash ideas of sexism and misogyny, as Phipps (2017a) explains. However, it also provides a pertinent interpretation of laddish behaviour within a context where women’s gains are rising. For example, Phipps (2017a) and Phipps and Young (2015b) argue, within the context of sex, laddish or ‘raunchy’ sexualities are central to lad culture. This raunchy-ness positions men as sexually active and often aggressive, and women as passive and merely responsive. However, when women articulate their sexual agency in any way, the response from within lad culture includes rejection and judgement. In this regard, Phipps (2017a) claims lad culture attempts “to put women back in their place” (824) by reclaiming traditionally male territory through violence and sexism (817). In the context of a popular feminism that presents men’s powerful position in society as challenged, Phipps (2017a) argues lad culture reasserts normative constructions

of both masculinity and femininity. In this way, Phipps (2017a) draws the similarities between neoliberal postfeminist rationality and laddish masculinities, as both have sexualised and consumerist dimensions and work to re-establish neoconservative gender roles and binaries.

Third, Phipps (2017a) identifies two different types of laddish masculinities defined through class within the context of the neoliberal HE. Drawing on the distinction between working-class and middle-class masculinities, she claims the reproduction of the former within the classroom could be understood as articulating alienation against neoliberal, feminised and middle-class education. The contexts of socio-economic austerity shaping HE could be interpreted as producing a marginalisation of less privileged students who might feel alienated and thus engage in disruptive practices. However, middle-class laddish masculinity, she explains, tends to fit well within neoliberal constructions of the 'naturally brilliant' student (Jackson and Dempster 2009) who does not need to put in the effort. Phipps (2017a) claims that while working-class laddish masculinities are seen as disruptive in the classroom, the ones reported at elite Universities have been characterised as intimidating and aggressive. Furthering this, Phipps engages in what she calls a sympathetic reading of laddism, arguing laddish performances could be interpreted first, as a form of release for the white, middle-class men who struggle in embodying a neoliberal subjectivity in education; or second, as a laddish resistance against "excessively politically correct" campus cultures, where discussions around freedom of speech have been used to protect laddish sexism and bigotry (2017a: 824).

Fourth, in exploring the neoliberal framing of sexual violence in HE, Phipps (2017b) identifies protective strategies, or what she describes, following Ahmed's (2017) discussion on the public polishing of universities, as "institutional airbrushing" (2018), when dealing with claims of sexual assault and rape. Institutional airbrushing is articulated through a multiplicity of strategies, from dismissing claims, encouraging survivors to quietly settle matters, to engaging in "naming, shaming and punishing" practices that present abusive behaviour as an individual problem rather than a structural one (Phipps, 2017b; 2019). In this regard, Phipps (2017b; 2019) argues, the increasing neoliberalisation of HE has made it dependent on market forces therefore transforming it from being a community-based space to a marketable commodity. Phipps (2017b) argues, within the context of austerity cuts and competitive marketization, the commodity needs to be impeccable. She claims:

> "*Markets in higher education operate via hierarchies of performance, and are also subject to the vagaries of public opinion. We do not want to lose our star Professor and his grant income. We do not want negative media coverage to damage our standing with potential students or key international donors. In some situations, we may reckon these priorities up against one another*." (2017b: 358)

In this light, Phipps (2017b; 2019) claims these preoccupations interact with traditional institutional hierarchies – also intersecting with race, class, gender and other relations – in order to guarantee "people are reckoned up differently" (2018: 9). Regarding sexual violence, perpetrators are often safeguarded because of the potential damages to the institutional brand if the issues are taken seriously rather than being swept under the carpet (Phipps 2017b; 2019). Protecting the reputation of the neoliberal University therefore becomes of utmost importance, subordinating equality to market concerns (2017b). The potential costs of disclosure of abusive or sexually violent behaviours positions the neoliberal University on the side of market profitability, resulting in both a direct and indirect enabling of these behaviours since they largely go undealt with. This results in the reproduction of institutionalised patterns of injustice that allow for the prevalence of discriminatory practices on campuses. These institutionalised patterns can take many forms: from sexual harassment and assault reporting procedures being biased against survivors (Oppenheim 2019), persecutory practices against students' calling out transphobia and racism on campuses (Ashcroft 2018; Rawlinson 2019), to the dissemination of overtly sexist and misogynistic posters trivialising rape (Davies 2013). Consequently, the marketization of Universities makes these institutions complicit, in different degrees, with sexual violence and the reproduction of misogynistic laddish behaviours.

With regards to the figure of ladettes, it is possible to see the neoliberal and postfeminist underpinnings shaping both its mediated representation and its social reproduction. Jackson and Tinkler (2007) argue constructions of modern women framed under the ladette paradigm define it in terms of modern girls' troublesome femininity, through hedonism notions of binge drinking and clubbing. This leisure-seeking attitude, Jackson and Tinkler (2007) argue, is portrayed as a consequence of the increased social and economic independence of women in modern British society, which is underpinned by the gains made by women regarding their entering to the working sphere. In this sense, the ladette emerges as articulating in complex ways the idea of girl power and the 'can do' discourse that celebrate, in a postfeminist fashion, women's competence and potential as consumer agents in global markets while attempting to

maintain the traditional gender order. It is due to the ladette's transgressivity of acceptable gender performances that media portrayals of 'ladettism' (Jackson and Tinkler 2007: 269) have constructed ladettes generally as worse than laddish men, an idea that Jackson (2006a; 2006b), in her study on ladettes in secondary schools, found prevalent among her interviewees.

So far, I have located this research within the broader area of masculinity(ies) studies. I have engaged critically with the concept of lad culture and laid out some of the problems of its conceptualisation, hence addressing some gaps in the literature. I then explored the mediated origins of the concept of lad culture and the different ways this has evolved and changed as a result of the shifts in the socio-cultural context. I have also located contemporary articulations of lad culture within the social discourses of postfeminism and neoliberalism, a contextualisation that further shapes my view on hegemonic masculinities as placed alongside a fluid spectrum. In the final section of this review, I aim to zoom into current versions of lad culture that are shaping the University spaces and the ways these are experienced and felt by the student body. Given the high reports of sexism, misogyny, racism and homophobia in University campuses (Busby 2019b; Frot 2019; Lee and Kennelly 2019; Young-Powell and Gil 2015), I believe this is the area where contemporary concerns about lad culture lay. This is why I believe a focus on lad culture within HE environments is crucial in order to attempt to find tools that can help tackle these attitudes on campuses.

2.3 DEEPENING LAD CULTURE ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

This section is organised in two parts. I first explore previous research on lad culture and look at the ways it has been conceptualised as linked to alcohol consumption, sports and academic achievement both within educational and social contexts. Second, I draw attention to gaps in our knowledge, where more research is needed to broaden our understanding of lad culture. In the latter, I engage critically with previous literature and problematise its focus to build my research.

2.3.1 CONCEPTUALISING LAD CULTURE

In their NUS-commissioned study, Phipps and Young (2013) define lad culture as:

> "*a 'pack' mentality evident in activities such as sport and heavy alcohol consumption, and 'banter' which was often sexist, misogynist and homophobic. It was also thought to be sexualized and to involve the objectification of women, and at its extremes rape supportive attitudes and sexual harassment and violence*" (53).

Phipps and Young's project focuses on the experiences of women with lad culture in HE. The study was based on the responses of 40 female, largely cis, British, white and heterosexual HE students[4]. Among their findings, Phipps and Young (2013) argue the participants described lad culture as highly influential within the social spaces of University life. This led the participants to perceive these spaces to be the primary sites for the creation of campus culture. This campus culture was depicted as involving social nights and extra-curricular activities such as student unions and sports. Within these environments, accounts of sexual harassment and assault were common, therefore reflecting recent mediated debates on the prevalence of rape culture in UK Universities (Batty 2019; Dunbar 2019; Reynolds 2018). However, the women in the study also highlighted laddish practices within classrooms, therefore drawing attention to the gendered dimension of educational environments. Within this context, the women described behaviours such as actively displaying negative attitudes towards gender-related topics or being loud and "arrogant with friends" during lectures (40). Drawing on the participants' responses, Phipps and Young (2013) argue that the reproduction of lad culture in HE highly affected the participants' social, educational and personal spheres of their lives at University. For example, some participants claimed lad culture had infiltrated their lives and intimate relations, therefore making it difficult for them to maintain committed relationships. This, for Phipps and Young (2013), exposes the problematics of lad culture considering its deeply invasive nature and the negative consequences it has, particularly over female students.

In his research on lad culture, Dempster (2009; 2011) explores the interrelationship between masculinity and laddishness, highlighting its links with sex and alcohol consumption. Drawing on Wetherell and Edley's (1999) psycho-discursive reading of Connell's (1995) hegemonic masculinity, Dempster (2011) argues laddishness is a template for British masculinity. Wetherell and Edley (1999) offer a reading of hegemonic masculinity that focuses on the psychological processes that underpin men's construction of gender identity. In particular,

[4] See Appendix 1 and 2 in Phipps and Young (2013) for a full outline of participant demographics.

Wetherell and Edley (1999) focus on the role discursive practices play in men's construction of subjectivity, inasmuch as individuals' sense-making is shaped by "vocabularies of motive, culturally recognizable emotional performances and available stories for making sense" (338). Wetherell and Edley (1999) draw on Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse, referring to the way knowledge and social practices are constituted defining what is and is not intelligible, and describe hegemonic masculinity as an influential discourse that has power to construct particular knowledge about gender as true. Dempster (2011) argues, the discourse of hegemonic masculinity is personified through templates of the "macho man" or "the lad" (635). Consequently, this shapes men's understanding of themselves and their masculinities, therefore influencing their behaviour (Wetherell and Edley 1999).

In his study, Dempster (2011) draws on data collected on male students at Westchester University (fictitious name) both through questionnaires and interviews. The study aimed to explore men's (dis)association with laddishness as a template for hegemonic masculinity. Dempster (2011) explains excessive alcohol consumption in the form of, for example, drinking competitions, was characterised by the participants as normal within the campus student life. In this regard, Dempster argues heavy drinking emerged as a mark of respectability, therefore assuming an essential practice in understanding undergraduate articulations of laddishness. Socialising encompassing heavy alcohol consumption appeared as means of reaffirming one's real manhood. However, the participants in the study refrained from constructing laddish identity as something inherent to young men's identities; they viewed it as an identity to put on when/if drinking. This performing of the laddish identity was complicated and contradictory. Dempster (2011) argues the requirement to prove masculinity through heavy drinking was unstable, in need of constant maintenance and subject to interrogation by other men.

Despite the emphasis Dempster (2011) places on the role of alcohol in performing laddish masculinities, he also identifies further conflicting discursive practices that position heavy drink-induced laddish behaviour in antagonistic positions. Some of the participants attempted to distance themselves from extreme displays of drunk laddishness in two ways: by comparing their behaviour more favourably to the drunken aggressiveness of sports teams, and; by justifying their own laddish moments as inauthentic and momentary performances. Laddishness, then, appears to be a performance one can 'slip' into at specific moments, such as during nights out or drinking sessions. However, this 'slipping' needs to be monitored in

order not to be deemed as problematic laddish (sporty) masculinities. Concerning this, Dempster (2011) positions his participants as 'non-hegemonic' men, yet as also refusing domination by the 'proper' lads inasmuch as they rejected sporty templates of masculinity. In this light, Dempster (2011) argues the men engaged in a "plurality of resistances" (649), carried out individually rather than in group, against alcohol drinking-based hegemonic laddish masculinity. Nevertheless, Dempster (2011) explains these resistances were still articulated within a fearful context of being seen as a 'lightweight', which shows the complexities that making sense of and articulating laddish masculinities poses for young undergraduate men.

Furthering his discussion of lad culture, Dempster (2009) analysed the role sports play in constructing laddish masculinities among undergraduate male students. He draws on the Westchester data and argues sports are a signifier for successful masculinity. Out of the questionnaire, Dempster (2009) claims 66.7% labelled playing in a sports team as laddish, while more than half of the interviewees located sports teams as places where laddish masculinity was constructed. From this, Dempster (2009) identifies three integral characteristics of laddishness: sexualised behaviours, violence and aggression, and excessive drinking. From the questionnaire, 88.3% considered propositioning women as a crucial aspect of laddishness. In the interview data, the participants tied this practice to something that often involved rugby or football players. From making crude remarks to women about their body to groping them in clubs, the interview participants positioned women as sexual objects, only considered for their attractiveness and the potentiality of engaging in sexual activities with them. In doing this, the men reproduced sexualised behaviours and reinforced notions of heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity, positioning men and masculinity as superior to women and femininity.

Considering this, Dempster argues sport masculinities draw on discourses of muscularity and physical superiority, drinking and "*fucking*" (Edwards 1997: 82 in Dempster 2009: 482), which are integral for the reproduction of the hegemonic template of laddish masculinities. Nevertheless, some of the participants articulated resistance to the alleged superior sporty laddish identity, particularly through describing them as exaggerating their masculinity. Despite this rejection of laddish masculinities, Dempster (2009) identifies the participants engaged in complicit behaviours that underline hegemonic masculinity templates. For example, some of the participants viewed themselves as performing more authentic masculinities than the sport students. In doing this, they subverted the laddish masculine

hierarchy topped by sport team masculinities, as they were deemed inauthentic. As a result, the men in the study constructed themselves as superior to the sport team students, hence reproducing the hierarchical structures of hegemonic laddish masculinity. In this regard, hegemonic laddish masculinities appear as almost inescapable for men at University, as even when attempting to subvert its hegemony, this was done using hegemonic means to diminish laddish behaviours, such as deeming themselves as more authentic and hence, superior. Following psycho-discursive approaches, Dempster (2009) claims this mode of resistance:

> "*suggests both a model of power which is individualised and the 'dividends' of hegemonic masculinity are less about collective dominance, and more about empowering individuals and enhancing their social acceptance."* (650)

Continuing the research on undergraduate men and laddish masculinities, Jackson and Dempster (2009) explore the role of academic achievement in the construction of lad culture in HE and schools. This research drew on data collected from HE and secondary school male students. The authors situate their work within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, and particularly focus on traditional masculinity's rule of feminine rejection (Kimmel 2008) to examine how it shapes laddish behaviours among male students. In this research, Jackson and Dempster (2009) identify two significant discourses underpinning the participants' constructions of laddish masculinities: first, the discourse of 'uncool to work' and second, of 'effortless achievement' (341). The 'uncool to work' discourse is described as essential in order to perform a 'cool' laddish masculinity, for which boys and young men have to show a laid back and relaxed attitude towards academic studies. Despite this discourse being evident across both HE and school research, Jackson and Dempster (2009) argue it is less explicit in HE, possibly due to it being a discourse associated with school and not overtly accepted in non-compulsory education.

Drawing on the HE data, Jackson and Dempster (2009) identify the 'effortless achievement discourse' as characterized by creating a dichotomy between female and male approaches to academic work: while female students were depicted as highly organised and "unnecessarily" prepared (346), male students were described as messy last-minute essay writers. Despite the negative representation of male students, the participants positioned themselves as equally successful as the women: achieving the same grades with only half of the effort and enjoying a social life that women, according to the participants, did not have. Jackson and Dempster

(2009) argue, this particular construction of the "masculine ways of working" (347) is presented as superior to hard work. In this regard, masculine (effortless) achievement is constructed as authentic, an indication of true intelligence, whereas the feminine is constructed as inauthentic, as lacking 'natural' academic abilities. In doing this, the men in the study situated themselves as rejecting the notion of work due to it being contrived as feminine and therefore presenting themselves in terms of acceptable masculinity.

Furthering the research on lad culture within educational settings, Jackson, Dempster and Pollard (2015) explore understandings of laddism in HE in teaching-learning contexts. For this, the authors drew on data collected among both undergraduate students and lecturers from different genders and ages that were studying or lecturing on a sports science degree. First, Jackson, Dempster and Pollard (2015) examine how lecturers and students made sense of lad culture and laddish displays within classroom's environments. Drawing on the participants' responses, laddishness was constructed as ridiculous, childish, and sometimes disruptive. The participants' interpretations of the lads described them as attempting to humour and being disrespectful to lecturers by interrupting their teaching through classroom talk or telling jokes. This specific description of lad culture moves away from previous characterizations of it as enacting more extreme forms of laddishness, such as the ones depicted in the above reviewed NUS report (Phipps and Young 2013). The authors (2015) suggest this might be due to the specific teaching-learning context of their research, where less extreme behaviours are likely to appear. However, regardless of the absence of behaviours more typically associated with lad culture (e.g. drinking, sexist remarks), the laddishness displayed by men in classrooms was depicted as significantly disruptive and as hindering learning.

In this study, Jackson, Dempster and Pollard (2015) argue laddish disruptive behaviour could be articulating a certain resistance to the dominant and traditional culture of HE, which, as I have explored above, remains heavily classed. As they explain, the student body in the science degree they studied came largely from working class backgrounds. In this respect, acting out in class or interrupting the lecture with 'banter' could be understood as a way for students to resist HE culture and a refusal to adopt a "good student subjectivity" (Grant 1997 in Jackson, Dempster and Pollard 2015: 309). However, they are careful not to construct these students as "heroic resisters" (310), specially at the expense of women and other students who see their learning obstructed by them.

Further research has also been done with a focus on staff experiences of lad culture in HE. In this line, Jackson and Sundaram (2018) explore staff perspectives on laddishness and their perception of its pervasiveness. The reasons the authors give for selecting staff members as their only participants were multiple, including that their sense-making of lad culture might: provide a different perspective of it; offer opinion on institutional responses; and provide specific insights if they are likely to be tasked with tackling lad culture. Following on this last point, Jackson and Sundaram (2018) argue that attempts to challenge lad culture, sexual violence and harassment need to be implemented institutionally.

In the study, Jackson and Sundaram (2018) argue staff perception of lad culture tended to localise laddish behaviours within the social sphere of University (i.e. pubs and clubs) and was rather focused on its most extreme displays of misogynistic hegemonic laddishness, such as sexual assault and rape. They argue that staff interpretations of laddishness resonated with media reports that centred the conversation exclusively on its extreme and toxic manifestations. The problem this poses, Jackson and Sundaram (2018) claim, is that in representing lad culture only focusing on its extreme performances reinforces the idea that the perpetrators are a "few bad apples" who can be identified easily (6). Following this, staff members recognised the existence of laddish behaviours in different forms (e.g. physical/verbal abuse), however coming often from the same source, which tended to be rugby players. They interpret these behaviours as intended to humiliate and demean, particularly, female students and workers.

The participants' talk, as explained by Jackson and Sundaram (2018), also pointed to the relative invisibility that laddishness enjoys within educational contexts such as classrooms. The authors suggest such invisibility could be explained by a number of reasons. First, the student participants' interpretation of lad culture as enacted through its visible displays of hegemonic masculinity could work to render invisible more 'moderate' or 'everyday' sexist practices happening inside the classroom that would not necessarily be categorised as 'extreme', and therefore laddish. Second, the unwillingness of HE institutions to tackle misogynistic laddish behaviours, specifically those of assault and rape, results in the invisibilization of the problem in an attempt to protect the institution's reputation. Third, in the study, there was a common perception by academic lecturers that lad culture was invisible to them because they did not visit the spaces where laddish practices take place, such as clubs. However, among the non-academic staff who did frequent these spaces, this perception was not supported. In fact, this

group of participants exposed the ubiquity of laddishness in all social spaces, articulated in forms of unwanted attention and sexual harassment.

Centring the conversation on teaching-learning contexts, and drawing on the participants' responses, Jackson and Sundaram (2018) argue performances of laddishness appear to be more common in post-1992 institutions, with behaviours that were similar to those reported at school level (Jackson 2006b): being late to class, interrupting the lecturer and being generally disruptive. However, a further laddish performance was identified by staff, through anonymous student evaluations. A participant shared a story that happened to a colleague where she was described as MILF (Mother I'd Like to Fuck) on the comments section in the feedback form. Instances such as this one, Jackson and Sundaram (2018) argue, highlight the need for lad culture in HE to be "considered beyond its forms and impacts on social spaces" (12). Furthering this, they expose the problem of unilaterally conceptualising lad culture as almost exclusively associated with alcohol consumption and sports, as other articulations of misogyny and sexism are not identified or get normalised, thus making it harder to tackle. In my thesis, I attempt to explore articulations of lad culture beyond social spaces by also paying attention to how lad culture is perceived by the participants to shape University educational environments.

Regarding the research of lad culture in online settings, the literature seems to be quite limited (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019a), despite both the breadth of research on online misogyny and lad culture's most recent articulations through online means, such as the University of Warwick WhatsApp scandal case (Busby 2018c). Notwithstanding, it is pertinent to note how literature looking at online misogyny has often linked the so-called 'geek masculinity' to broader laddish cultures, particularly within HE STEM environments (Blodgett and Salter 2018; Maleney 2017; Salter 2017; Vasileiou and Haskell-Dowland 2019). Geek masculinity describes a masculine subjectivity underpinned by technological forms of dominance that maintains gendered stereotypes about male's higher aptitude for technology and female's incompetence (Salter 2017). In this way, geek men construct their gendered subjectivity through claiming their technical competence as the basis for their masculinity (Murray 1993). Geek masculinity resists hypermasculinity and occupies a low status within hierarchised masculinities, inasmuch as male geeks are not seen as embodying hegemonic masculine notions of strength or heterosexual prowess (Taylor 2012). It is due to this outsider position that geek masculine culture has been co-opted and exploited by incels, the alt-right, MRAs

(Men's Rights Activism) and PUAs (Pick Up Artists) (Domise 2018; Reage Jr. 2019; Walter 2016; Almong and Kaplan 2017).

Considering the regular linkage between geek culture and lad culture mentioned above, it is important to note the relationship between online misogynistic cultures such as incels, MRAs and PUAs and lad culture. There are obvious similitudes between these forms of masculinist cultures: its misogyny, its condoning attitudes regarding violence against women and their articulation of hegemonic ideals of masculinity that position men as superior to women. However, there are also vast differences, among which I particularly identify three. First, while incels, MRAs and PUAs communities are organised in specific online forums and operate on an identity-based model, with men frequently identifying as incels or pick up artists, lad culture lacks any online organisation and is not identity-based. Second, these online manosphere communities have specific goals and reproduce and share particular strategies among its members to help them realise these objectives (e.g. manuals of seduction by PUAs involving negging, a form of insulting backhanded compliment [Almog and Kaplan 2017], incels manifestos such as '*My Twisted World*' authored by mass murderer Elliot Rodger [The New York Times 2014]). Men who participate in lad culture do not have specific target goals, neither do they follow directions from other lads on how to accomplish them. Third, whilst most of these male online communities have strong ideological standpoints framing their practices and behaviours (e.g. male supremacy, anti-feminism, red pill), lad culture does not have a specific ideological foundation since its articulations are multiple and enacted by vastly different men. In spite of these differences, it could be argued that lad culture acts as a gateway to more extreme masculinist communities. In fact, I argue, lad culture, normalises forms of misogynistic and sexist behaviours (e.g. banter) from their position of privilege (for a further comment on the relation between these masculinist cultures, please see Chapter 9).

This literature on lad culture provides an understanding of who forms and constitutes lad culture within the university and in relation to other masculinist online cultures. Drawing on this work, lad culture emerges as inextricably linked to misogynistic behaviours, campus sports cultures, alcohol consumption and social environments (e.g. clubs, pubs), but also as a set of practices that transcend these spaces, being also located in classroom settings. With this, lad culture appears as ever-present across University campuses, in a multiplicity of forms and taken up by a wide range of male students. Even though references were made to construct a

particular version of the lad (e.g. the rugby or football lad), this work highlights the flexibility of the hegemonic laddish identity, as it is reworked and adopted by different men.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In this review of the literature, I have provided a primary understanding to some of the ideas within lad culture research that I build on in the thesis. I have overviewed the field of masculinity studies by exploring tensions within it. From a celebratory IMT rhetoric that praises 'inclusive masculinities' to a more critical reading of it that argues its ties with modern articulation of hegemonic masculinities and its sexist and misogynistic underpinnings, this review of concerns within the field allow me to situate lad culture research within the larger field of men and masculinities. This is pertinent inasmuch as I believe lad culture cannot be explored without reference to masculinity studies. Following this, I have engaged critically with the concept of lad culture and with the literature on this topic by addressing some gaps and identifying points where I build my research to further the understanding of lad culture. The critical points made were four: 1) lad culture as being described as a homogeneous practice, not accounting for differences that shape its articulation; 2) lad culture as a term being used in a monolithic fashion and circumscribed almost exclusively to educational environments; 3) the concept of lad culture as a 'one size fits all' which could potentially result in the trivialisation of serious practices such as rape; and 4) previous research centring of masculinity as the main focus. Through this critical engagement, I presented the ways in which this thesis both builds on previous research and furthers it. In this project, I address these gaps by understanding lad culture as a fragmented and un-cohesive concept, by rendering it as a masquerade of masculinity without ontological security and by centring non-masculine people's sense-making of lad culture and their everyday experiences within it.

After critically engaging with previous conceptualisations of lad culture, I have explored the mediated origins of the concept of lad culture and how the term has been articulated in panic discourses based on a gendered divide of academic achievement. In doing this, I have contextualised the concept of lad culture in specific socio-cultural discourses that have shaped its meaning and understanding, such as debates on toxic masculinity and rape culture. In exploring the term's contemporary implications, I have explored its interrelationship with the discourses of neoliberalism and postfeminism. Drawing on relevant literature, I have defined neoliberalism as a logic that expands over multiple aspects of life, primarily based on an

increasing individualisation of society where subjects are produced as autonomous and self-managing individuals responsible for their own life's destiny. I have described postfeminism as inextricably linked to neoliberalism, inasmuch as it draws on neoliberal logic to construct women as empowered, self-governing and responsible subjects who are no longer in need of feminist politics. In this regard, I have argued postfeminism evidences the gendered nature of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism and postfeminism thus shape the reproduction of lad culture as a result of an increasing neoliberalisation of HE environments where systems of performance and competition are informing students' public and intimate life. Lad culture's strong focus on competition evidences this: from performing competitive hegemonic masculinities, to engaging in sexualised practices of rating women's sex appeal. In exploring the current socio-cultural underpinnings of lad culture, I have provided a solid frame of reference for the concept and how it is understood in this thesis.

In what follows, I set out the methodological underpinnings of the thesis and explore how the frameworks of affect, agency and feminist methodology inform and shape the development of my feminist affective methodology.

Chapter 3: Feeling this? Affect, Agency and Feminist Methodology

"*Affect is not meant to be a simple placeholder for identity in my work. Indeed, it is supposed to be something altogether different; it is, instead, supposed to be descriptive of the receptors we use to hear each other and the frequencies on which certain subalterns speak and are heard or, more importantly, felt.*" (Muñoz, 2006: 677)

In the previous chapter, I explored the concept of lad culture as a discourse, and the different components that help create and maintain the construct. Drawing on previous literature on the topic, I have highlighted the many consequences of lad culture within the context of Higher Education for those that participate in it (e.g. men that identify themselves as lads) and for those that do not. However, in this research it is not my intent to offer a study of lad culture that renders it as the sole cause of problems on University campuses. With this study, I look at the overarching discourses that frame and shape laddish behaviours, providing a novel understanding of sexism and gender relations through the mapping of the affective fabric of lad culture.

My study therefore addresses a significant gap in the literature on lad culture by exploring its affective dimensions. This enables me to comprehensively examine the ways that lad culture shapes possible ways of thinking, feeling and being for HE students. In looking at the affective life of lad culture, I also examine the relationship between affect and subjectivity, and affect and agency. To do this, my research explores accounts of 29 University students' experiences with lad culture. As a result, I attempt to complicate the relationship between affect, agency and subjectivity through the development of a feminist affective methodology. This methodology focuses on the experiential knowledge of the participants to make sense of the emotions and affective subjectivities that circulate within the context of lad culture.

The workings of lad culture within HE have been explored in previous literature, particularly within the field of feminist research. However, despite their crucial relevance in furthering the understanding of how lad culture reproduces itself, through notions of alcohol and aggressiveness, this body of research has not yet accounted for lad culture's affective fabric.

The research uses participatory cooperative inquiry as its method of data collection. I draw on different theorisations of affect (affect understood as pre-cognitive and discursive) and agency (performative and intersubjective) to develop a feminist affective methodology that is explored through discourse. The tension between affect, agency and discourse manifests itself throughout the analysis. I do not intend to provide an unproblematised interpretation of each idea when using them in the analysis. Rather, I attempt to explore the tensions, similarities and differences that are tangled up in the participants' accounts to complicate the data. In doing this, my aim is to pay attention to the affective fabric of lad culture and examine the ways participants construct their subjectivities and make sense of their encounters with lad culture. In what follows, I examine the so-called 'turn to affect' in the humanities and social sciences and the different theorisations of the concept of 'affect'. Following this, I offer my own conceptualisations of affect and explain how it is understood in the thesis.

3.1 THE TURN TO AFFECT

To pinpoint the origins of the study of affect is a complicated matter, inasmuch as there are many histories of affect. Although the increase in popularity of affect can be located in the 90's and 00's (Blackman 2012), its beginnings could be tracked all the way back to Spinoza, particularly to the publishing of his book '*Ethics*' in 1677. Spinoza's *Ethics* developed some of the foundational ideas regarding the autonomy of affect that would later on be adapted by authors more recently such as Massumi (1995). The origins of affect could also be attributed to Bergson's (1986[1888]) engagement with Spinoza's work in the late 19th Century and beginning of the 20th Century, a period where introspective psychology was rising (Danziger 1980). In more recent times, the turn to affect could be situated either in the 60's, with the development of positive and popular psychology and Tomkins' book introducing his own theory of affect (1962[2008]; 1963[2008]); or in the 80's and 90's, through the work of authors such as Massumi and Deleuze and Guattari (Wetherell 2013).

Affect theory's complex genealogy through different times and centuries speaks to the fascination of humanities and social science research with the concept of affect (Leys 2011). Leys (2011) explores this fascination, and attributes it to the neglect of the corporeal and emotional dimensions of life in previous social research. This disregard for the affective is due to the entrapment of social theory in the plane of signification (Blackman 2008). Signification, or the 'turn to language' (Blackman 2008) in social research, positions signs and discourse as

the site where subjectivity is constructed and identity performed, through the use of symbols and the deployment of social constructs (e.g. masculinity, femininity). Social constructionism is a sociological theory of knowledge that explores the relational construction of knowledge and understanding of the world (Andrews 2012). For social constructionism, knowledge is not discovered; it is constructed. This construction occurs through a number of discourses, often understood by social constructionists as a set of ideas, meanings and knowledges that present the world in a particular way at the expense of other ways of understanding (Potter and Hepburn 2008). The location of language as central in the formation of the subject is seen by theorists keen on the affective turn as limited, as it only focuses on the representational elements of life. Therefore, social constructionism is seen as restricted to producing a representational ontology of the subject. What this representational theory excludes is the non-representational, the excess of "narrative" (Massumi 2002: 26). And in this excess, for many, is where affect resides.

The turn to affect is underscored by the premise that affect escapes language and representation. As a result, the study of affect is marked by both an epistemological and ontological shift, one that challenges previous research tools, theoretical frameworks and methodologies shaped by representational thinking (Stewart 2007: 7; Thrift 2007: 57). Such methods are considered outside of the possibilities of studying affect. In attempting to explore affect, the question to ask would be: what is affect theory bringing to social research? Blackman and Venn explain affect theory brings:

> "*[…] a common ontology linking the social and the natural, the mind and body, the cognitive and affective is beginning to appear, grounded in such concepts as assemblage, flow, turbulence, emergence, becoming, compossibility, relationality, the machinic, the inventive, the event, the virtual, temporality, autopoiesis, heterogeneity and the informational.*" (2010: 7)

A focus on the non-conscious, asocial and non-verbal depths of bodily experience constitute affect theory's main ontological focus. The affective turn *turns to* the non-cognitive, but also to the human body in its corporeality. The turn to the human body establishes a further departure from representational theory, as the latter conceptualises the body as the product of cultural discourses, constantly shaped by the performativity of language (Clough 2007). However, commenting on the novelty of this field of studies, Cvetkovich (2012: 8) argues the turn to affect is not as original, arguing that feminist and queer research has been for a while

preoccupied with the public life of feelings and its relation "between private and public spheres, and the construction of interiority, subjectivity, embodiment, and intimate life."

However, one of the novelties of affect theory is its preoccupation with the potentialities of bodies. For Deleuze and Guattari (1988), affect alludes to changes regarding bodily capacity. For Latour (2004), the opposite of having a body is being dead, becoming a corpse. Hence, Latour argues having a body is learning to be moved, to be affected, "to be put into motion by other entities, human or non-human" (205). In this regard, to have a body is to experience affect, and to experience affect is to have a body. Consequently, Latour (2004) argues, the inability to affect and be affected is equivalent to being dead. The incapacity to be moved signifies one's death. In this light, affect and body are inextricably intertwined as one becomes the condition of possibility of the other. Having a body becomes the way we develop an affective attuning (Trivelli 2015) or how we become attuned to the affective fabric of life (Blackman 2012). However, this 'becoming attuned' is not a linear process. Anderson (2005), influenced by Spinoza's ideas around affect, argues the attunement to affect is a transpersonal ability of the body, in that the body has the capacity to both affect and be affected. The Spinozist conception of affect as a generative force opens up the body to a world of encounters, where affect "flows through and between bodies" (Blackman 2012: 40).

Despite the focus on the human body as a site of affective potentialities, the turn to affect also explores non-human bodies[5] and technological artefacts, therefore adopting a nonanthropocentric and nonanthropologistic approach to bodies and matter. Clough (2007) argues, the way the affective turn engages with bodies (human and nonhuman, animal and machine), challenges us to think differently about matter, as it becomes alive, dynamic and active (Clough 2007; 2008). Massumi refers to representational theory as presenting the body as mediated and interpellated by language (2002: 2). In representational theory, he argues, the body is thought of as "dumb" matter, insofar as it can only be legible if scrutinised through a dominant signifying scheme in which human subjects become interpellated (1-2). Even though Massumi recognises the potentialities to resist this discursive body through its social performance, he argues this body does not "sense" (9), therefore presenting the representational

[5] This contradicts Latour's argument regarding the incapacity to experience affect as signifying the death of the body, inasmuch it could be argued the dead body is a non-human body, they are not animate. Yet, here, they are framed as one of the objects of study of affect, therefore attributing them with affective capacity.

body as not alive. By contrast, reconfiguring bodies in the turn to affect is, for Clough (2008), the most provocative contribution of affect theory, as it allows us to rethink of the relationship of the human body to its environment, and therefore, to nonhuman bodies (Clough 2007).

The opening of organic bodies to nonorganic ones is made possible through the circulation of affect. Affect theory complicates bodily matters as it conceptualises the body as inter- or intra-corporeal and trans-subjective: not bounded, fixed or singular (Blackman and Venn 2010: 8). Even though poststructuralist theories had already theorised the undefined and boundless subject through the proclamation of the death of the author, the turn to affect highlights the affective excess of the subject, objects and the nonorganic life that underpins it and makes it alive and 'vibrant' (Clough 2008; Bennett 2010).

Within the turn to affect, Seigworth and Gregg (2010: 4-5) remind us that there can never be a single theory of affect, but only multiple interpretations. Consequently, it seems impossible to give a single account of affect, as all the different theories "delineate […] their own highly particular encounters with bodies, affects, worlds" (5). It could be argued, however, there are clear distinctions underpinning these multiple theories of affect: affect understood as pre-cognitive force; and affect understood as entangled with the discursive. This distinction creates a division in approaches within the turn to affect. Affect studies might be better understood as a continuum that includes different interpretations of the concept. However, this continuum also means that affect is a highly contested term. In what follows, I explore both theoretical frameworks, providing a comparative reading of them. Later, I offer my own definition of affect and how my understanding of it shapes the underlying methodology in this thesis.

Massumi (2002), following Deleuze (1997), defines affect as an intensity. Before crafting his own theorisation of affect, Massumi (27) remonstrates the lack of available vocabulary to describe affect, arguing the only usable vocabulary within the cultural theory stems from theories of signification. The lack of lexicon informing affect theories might give cue, according to Massumi, to a slippage back to psychological categories that were deconstructed under poststructuralist thought. What Massumi is referring to is the interchangeable use of affect and emotion. Under Massumi's philosophical parameter of understanding affect as an intensity, he believes affect and emotion follow different logics and, therefore, belong to different orders (27).

In his differentiation of affect from emotion, Massumi draws heavily on Deleuze (1997). Deleuze (1997) argues affect is different from emotion in that it is a bodily intensity that breaks and escapes the logics of social interpretation. In this light, affect as an intensity, for Deleuze (1997), manifests in the passing from one state of being to another, enabled by shifts in power that either decrease or increase. In Deleluze's account, hence, affect is concerned with the body and is irreducible to social understanding because it does not abide by reason. To highlight this purely asocial dimension of affect, Deleuze (1997) explores T.E. Lawrence's experience of being raped in the dessert. T.E Lawrence was a British military officer involved in the Arab revolt during the First World War. In his memoir book, T.E. Lawrence (1926) gave account of being gang raped by Turkish soldiers. In his graphic description of the attack, he recounts getting an erection in the midst of it. Deleuze (1997) takes this bodily action and uses it to exemplify the asociality of bodily affect. Lawrence's unruly body proves, for Deleuze, not being reducible to social logic and organisation[6].

It is Deleuze's ideas around affect that heavily influence Massumi's thinking and his development of the distinction between affect and emotion. He argues:

> "*Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning. It is intensity owned and recognized. It is crucial to theorize the difference between affect and emotion. […] affect is unqualified. As such, it is not ownable or recognizable […].*" (2002: 28)

With this direct separation of affect and emotion, Massumi theorises affect as an autonomous force, a "passion" that defers the action-reaction loop and the linearity of time (2002: 28). Massumi then presents his argument for the autonomy of affect through the 'missing half second' experiment. This experiment explains the relationship between brain activity and conscious intention. In the experiment, subjects were asked to flex a finger whenever they chose to and report when they became aware of this decision by recording the location of a revolving dot on a clock measuring fractions of a second. Benjamin Libet, the conductor of the experiment, found that the flexion of the finger took place 0.2 seconds after the subject noted

[6] I would like to raise the problematic ethics of using someone's description of rape as a way of proving the autonomy of affect.

their decision. However, the electroencephalograph (EGG) machine used to observe the brain activity of the subjects registered activity 0.3 seconds in advance to the subject's awareness of their decision. Libet concluded that unconscious cerebral activity starts voluntary actions prior to conscious aims or intentions. Nevertheless, Libet notes, the brain tricks us into believing our decisions are a result of conscious processes, when in fact, according to the experiment, they are not (Massumi 2002).

Drawing on this, Massumi (2002: 29) argues this missing half a second or half a second delay between unconscious and conscious activity is not empty; it is full of excess and overfull with intensity. For Massumi (2002), during this missing half second, the autonomy of affect is reflected. With this in mind, Massumi (2002) states that what is thought of to be 'higher functions' of the brain such as volition, referring to personal will and choice, are actually performed by unconscious and autonomous bodily reactions – affect (29-31). In this light, affect emerges as an asocial intensity that moves the brain-body matter independently from any type of conscious reaction. From this theorisation, consciousness and unconsciousness, the cognitive and the pre-cognitive, body and brain are acutely separated.

Massumi's interpretation of affect resonates with Tomkins' theorisation. Tomkins (1962 [2008]) explains there is a "radical dichotomy" between the causality of affect and the human interpretation of it (63). In doing this, Tomkins establishes a division between the causes of affect, framed as asignifying, and the human understanding of it – the signifying. This partition underscores the presumption of affect as a non-cognitive force insofar as affect, for Tomkins, is triggered randomly due to not knowing the objects or its relation to objects that trigger it. This means that affect is caused by an autonomic bodily reaction, not because of a particular object that we identify as 'triggering', as this would involve a rationalization of affective responses, which, under this theoretical framework, is impossible. As Massumi puts it, affect is "irreducibly bodily and autonomic" (2002: 28).[7]

[7] Tomkins and Massumi's understanding of affect, despite the pointing in this specific similarity regarding its non-conscious dimensions, are radically different. Tomkins' theorisation of affect evolves into the classification of nine innate affects and thirteen affective responses. This assortment sits in opposition to Massumi's understanding of affect inspired by Deleuzian and Spinozist ideas of affect as a fleeting intensity.

In their Massumi-inspired theorisation of affect, Seigworth and Gregg (2010) describe affect as an intensity passing in-between bodies – both human or nonhuman – and as the force of encounter (2). However, Seigworth and Gregg are careful to clarify that the word 'force' can be wrongfully interpreted, as affect is not required to be particularly forceful. In fact, they argue affect is more often found in everyday events in life: consequently, affect emerges in an unstable state of in-between-ness, accumulating a beside-ness (2). The beside-ness of affect marks it as an excess due to its capacity to extend and accumulate, acting upon bodies while also opening up to be acted on, marking "a body's belonging to a world of encounters" (2) and therefore, inextricably fundamental to a body's process of becoming: perpetually changing, moving and transforming. It is the potentiality of affect where Seigworth and Gregg (2-3) locate its power: the opening of bodies to affect and be affected, affect as a relational force. Even though Seigworth and Gregg draw heavily on Massumi in their definition of affect, they establish a departure from his theoretical framework with regards to the separation of affect and cognition. Seigworth and Gregg draw on Freud (1966) to think through this distinction. Despite Freud's initial claim that affect does not think or reflect, but acts acts, which could be interpreted as a further argument underscoring the pre-cognitive qualities of affect, Freud suggests that the circulation of affect takes place alongside the creation and movements of thought. As a result, unconscious and pre-cognitive affect is always connected to conscious thought. Consequently, Seigworth and Gregg argue affect and cognition cannot be disjointed, as thoughts are themselves a "body, embodied" (3).

So far, I have situated and reviewed contemporary perspectives within the turn to affect. I have considered the ontological framework of affective turn and examined the concept of affect by drawing on some of the most prominent authors in the field. In what follows, I review Leys, Wetherell and Thien's criticisms to the turn to affect in order to underline the tensions in the discipline before outlining my own understanding of affect within the thesis.

3.1.1 MEETING CRITICISMS

Leys (2011) positions herself in theoretical conflict to the distinction between pre-conscious affect and cognition. Leys (2011) argues, despite the different approaches to affect (from more neuroscientific – Tomkins, Damasio – to philosophical – Massumi, Deleuze), what all affect theory shares is their "*anti-intentionalism*" (2011: 443, emphasis in original). Leys renders as problematic the understanding of affect as detached from signification and interpretation

promulgated by theorists such as Massumi. For her, this signifies a moving away from ideology and representation to the "subpersonal material-affective responses", which involves a belief that this is where influential forces do "their real work" (450-51) – at the affective level. Leys (2011) argues that the problem this poses is a detachment between ideology and affect, which consequently makes the role of culture, politics and art trivial, in support of an ontological concern regarding people's "corporeal-affective reactions" (451). In a similar way, Berlant (1997; 2000-2002[2012]), coming from the perspective of literary criticism to explore the relationship between the intimate and the public, further criticises affect theory's division of emotion and affect. Berlant argues the feminist maxim "the personal is political", whose objective was to centre at the heart of politics the everyday affects and intimacies, is being reversed in apolitical ways therefore securing "sentimental patriarchal family values" (1977: 177-178).

With regards to Leys critique, it is important to note that she is not calling for a return to signification as the only legitimate way of making sense of the affective dimension of life. Rather, Leys is attempting to put cognition back on the map in order not to fall into an "essentially metaphysical" understanding of human (and nonhuman) experience reduced to being exclusively corporeal-material (457).

Further joining the critique of affect, Wetherell (2015; 2013; 2012) also contests the rejection of discursivity based on the embrace of the excess of affect. To explore this, Wetherell (2013) focuses on the relationship between affect and discourse, and its detachment from each other. Characterising this as unsustainable, Wetherell argues affect theorists who focus on the body as the exclusive site of asocial affect largely ignore the meaning-making contexts that frame and shape body-event encounters (2013: 351, 355). For example, dancing bodies are read within a particular socio-cultural context; women dancing alone in the club cannot be read without the social lens of sexual availability. For Wetherell, to see discourse and cognition in a relationship that excludes affect has "little point" (2012: 53), and it is not accurately based on the work of psychologists and neuroscientists, since affect theorists often disregard research on neuropsychology that emphasises the closeness of cognition and bodily activity rather than its separateness (2012: 61). In this regard, Wetherell argues, separating affective activity into either bodily or discursive components lacks purpose, as "bodies and sense-making are like two sides of the same sheet of paper" (53). With this, Wetherell makes a claim to end the

divisive tendencies in the turn to affect, calling on us to address the "whole sheet of paper": both the discursive and affective fabrics of life (53).

Coming from a feminist geography background, Thien (2005) also weighs into the critique of the turn to affect for its focus on the transhuman qualities of affect. Drawing particularly on McCormack (2003) and Thrift (2004), Thien argues the model of affect these authors theorise establishes a dichotomy between the emotional and the rational, and between personal and the political. Thien (2005) sees Thrift's desire to separate the concept of affect from anything "nice and cuddly" as a repudiation for a perceived feminised 'personal', therefore putting into place a hierarchized binary of emotion opposing reason, "as objectionably soft and implicitly feminized" (452). For Thien, this underscores the division between the personal and the political, insofar as affect theory sees them as intrinsically unrelated phenomena. As a result, Thien criticises McCormack and Thrift's accounts of affect as masculinist and technocratic. She suggests that they overlook feminist research in general, and work in feminist geography particularly, which has paid attention to the blurring boundaries between private, public, political, intersubjective and social dimensions of emotion.

From affect as purely presocial, autonomous and vibrant, to affect as tangled up with the socio-discursive, I locate my own interpretation of affect as standing in an unfixed middle: this middle is unfixed because I conceptualise affect in an assemblage, drawing on different theories of affect and sewing together disparate approaches to formulate my own. Below, I turn to offer my own understanding of affect and how it is worked through and applied in the thesis.

3.1.2 ZOOMING IN: AFFECT IN THE THESIS

In this thesis, I suggest meeting affect halfway, adapting Barad's (2007) book title '*Meeting the Universe Halfway'*, insofar as my understanding of affect sits between different theorisations. The interpretation of affect that I work through in the thesis considers its excess: affect as an intensity, as a force and as apotentiality (Massumi 2002). However, I also circumscribe affect within the social, as located, shaped and in an ongoing relationship with the socio-cultural and contextual (Wetherell 2012). My understanding of affect pays attention to the intersubjective, to the cognitive, to the emotional, while also considering the virtual and the bodily (Clough 2007). Drawing on Seigworth and Gregg (2010: 2), I see affect as marking "a body's belonging to a world of encounters" (with lad culture), where these encounters

signify the different socio-cultural contexts that shape the circulation of affect. It is my understanding of affect as closely tied with the social the reason why I bring attention to the psychosocial dimensions of affect.

Frosh (2003) describes the psychosocial as an entwined identity where the concepts of 'individual' and 'society' are brought together as closely connected. Frosh and Baraitser (2008) state psychosocial studies are a "place of 'suture'" (348) between the different factors contributing to the construction of the human subject. Following this, and drawing on Walkerdine's psychosocial work on gender and class (Walkerdine et al. 2001), Ringrose (2013) defines psychosocial approaches to methodology as enabling research to get beyond "the face value account" and conceptualise the intersubjective differences "through which discursive positions are enlivened" (75). Employing a psychosocial approach to affect in my thesis means paying close attention to both discursive and non-discursive elements shaping affect and affective relations. In doing this, I move beyond narratives of transparency that view people's accounts as unproblematic (Holloway and Jefferson 2000: 3), and instead complicate the narratives to explore the contradictions underpinning the psychic and social processes through which subjectivity is forged.

To conceptualise affect in the thesis, I turn to Blackman (2012). In discussing what affect is, Blackman states:

> "*Affect is not just an amorphous intensity or set of intensities, a formless process that flows through bodies, captured through emotion (Massumi, 2002). Rather, affect is part of the process through which adjustments to the milieu take place, including adjustments that involve the participation of human subjects, but which cannot be understood as singular human adjustments.*" (2012: 174)

Blackman's words resonate with my own understanding of affect, since she highlights the relationality of affect between humans and their socio-cultural environment, while simultaneously understanding the irreducibility of it to the individual. In this thesis, affect is understood as marking an individual, but also as tangled up in the multiplicity of bodies, contexts and social orders. I do not see affect as following a distinct detached life from the social, rather, I see it as overlapping with it. In seeing affect as inextricably embroidered in

social life, the difference between affect and emotion - between affect and the discursive – collapses.

As explored earlier in the chapter, affect understood as asocial and emotion understood as discursive is supported by a high number of affect theorists. The reason for this is not only the conviction that affect operates independently from the conscious, but also the belief that emotions naturalise affect attributing it to a conscious subject, which has been rendered as an essentialist take on the affective (Williams 2010). Nevertheless, I do not consider the inseparability of affect and emotion as following an essentialist naturalisation of affect. Rather, I think in terms of 'plugging in to' (Jackson and Mazzei 2013) both emotion and affect, the discursive and the non-representational. My position is that this approach complicates and enriches what is understood as affect.

Avoiding the hierarchical dichotomy of body/mind, affect theorised as virtual yet socially situated allows for an in-depth localised study of affect as in constant interplay with social discourses and structures, power relations and material-political hierarchies. In this light, Wetherell (2012: 122) points to the intimate relationship between the personal and the social texturing of "affective practices". Wetherell (2012) defines 'affective practice' as a concept whose focus on the emotional as it emerges allows for a flexible figuration and understanding of affect. Broadening the scope of affect and what is understood to be affected or affective would involve, for Wetherell (2012), thinking of affect in "affective intersectional" ways (122), as intimately and transversally connected both to the personal and social[8]. This transversality is where my psychosocial approach to affect fits in, inasmuch as I see affect as travelling and re-forming between social and personal planes, without collapsing on either. In this sense, I draw on Ahmed (2014a[2004]) to look at the way affect travels and to explore the relationships and bodily configurations that are created in the aftermath of affective circulation. Ahmed explores affect and emotion as unseparated phenomena, focusing particularly on their sticky qualities. In researching emotions' stickiness, Ahmed centres the social and the political in her theory of affect to inquire into how the circulation of affect helps shape power relations (for a more detailed explanation of Ahmed's idea of sticky affects, please refer to Chapter 6).

[8] Wetherell critiques the pre-social, as I have argued it is important to explore, however rather difficult to empirically study.

Addressing and exploring the affective underpinnings and the affective organisation of gendered power relations is central to my thesis. Lad culture in HE establishes a masculinist social hierarchy stratified by gender, race, sexuality, class, religion, etc. Approaching affect as autonomous, completely detached from cognition, discourse and the social would be to ignore the deeply affective experiences of the students that need to navigate their subject position within the context of lad culture. Criticising the freedom and autonomy of affect as theorised by Massumi (2002), Hemmings (2005) argues that this understanding of affect as "free", "open" and autonomous only works for some subjects. Conversely, others come to be "over-associated with affect", therefore becoming "the object of affective transfer" (2005: 561). Or to use Ahmed's words, some people are already "saturated with affect" (2004a: 11). To illustrate this, Hemmings (2005) draws on Fanon and Lorde's description of other people's affective reaction to their blackness. Because of their race, their existence within white racist societies was faced with responses filled with disgust and fear, which saturated their bodies with affect. Consequently, their black bodies became the place and object of an affective transfer that blocked their affective openness. In her critique, Hemmings states the move away from epistemology enacted by the turn to affect in a privileging of the ontological as disassociated from the social smooths out poststructuralism and, as a result, the crucial counter-hegemonic contributions made by postcolonial and feminist theorists (2005: 548).

These ideas are put into practice by Muñoz (2006: 676), who explains how belonging in alterity in his brown body is negotiated through specific "affective circuits". Focusing on depression, Muñoz argues feeling depressed or feeling down is inextricably connected to feeling brown, therefore describing brownness as a particular and structured affective site. Nevertheless, Muñoz is also careful of not falling into a reducible affect-identity relationship. As the quote from Muñoz starting this chapter states, affect for him is not a placeholder for his identity, but rather a place of exchange, of communication and of receptivity (2006: 677). From Muñoz's contribution, I take affect as being in constant interaction with identity, but not collapsing on it. Consequently, in the thesis, I understand affect as shaping the subjective in relationality with other social factors (see Chapter 6 for a detailed discussion of affect's relationality). It could be argued, hence, that my approach to affect is a feminist one.

Attesting to this, Gorton (2007) explains the involvement of feminist theory with feelings and passions makes feminism suffused with them. According to Pedwell and Whitehead (2012), feminist research on affect is varied, however, there is a common focus on the study of the

circulation of power through emotions and feelings and how it shapes ways of being through affective relationships and attachments (Pedwell and Whitehead 2012; Ahmed 2000; 2004a). Boler (1999) argues the disciplining of emotions is crucial to the exercise of power in hierarchical and gendered ways. Emotional control, Boler states (1999), has been performed for centuries with clear purposes: to maintain and reproduce Western patriarchy at the peak of the social order in a mirror-opposite to the inferior emotionality and irrationality of women (xiii). Boler claims, as a result, emotions have been kept quiet regardless of their intrinsic importance for maintaining the dichotomised rational/irrational status quo. In describing emotions as sites of disciplinary power, Boler (1999) also sees them as the basis for mobilising resistance and calling into question gendered oppression (108). Attention to emotions as sites for potential social transformation marks, for Wetherell, the advantage of affect in that it "brings the dramatic and the everyday back into social analysis" (2012: 2). In my thesis, I bring the everyday and ordinary affects (Stewart 2007) that lad culture mobilises, not only to explore the reproduction of gendered power relations, but also to map the affective dimensions of lad culture to understand how feelings/affects/emotions open us to negotiations of feminist resistance and practice[9].

Despite noting the potential of emotions as sites of change, it is important to note the risks of developing an individualistic account for social transformation, locating it as depending on individuals' affects and actions. Focusing exclusively on the individual would mean disregarding the structural dimensions of suffering (Berlant 1997). In this thesis, I approach affect as plugging in different elements (the social, the bodily, the cultural, the subjective, the discursive and the virtual) to explore how it shapes lad culture and its affectivity. Paying attention to the different layers that, I argue, create affect, allows me to provide rich research on lad culture with manifest feminist methodological underpinnings. In what follows, I consider the ways feminist methodological principles shape the research and the tensions that arose within it. First, I outline what I understand as feminist methodology in feminist research in order to turn to my own application of it in this thesis.

[9] I should note the assemblage of my methodology has Deleuzian influences. However, I am intentionally not labelling my methodological framework under Deluzian theory for two main reasons. First, given my discursive-affective underpinnings of my methodology I am not entirely drawing on Deleuzian affect theory, I am only using certain elements that work and help the crafting and application of the methodology. Second, bearing in mind the implications of citation politics (Ahmed 2013; Mott & Cockayne 2017), I am drawing on feminist academics that have used and explored Deleuzian theory.

3.2 FEMINIST METHODOLOGY(IES)

Given the discussion above on the relationship between affect, emotion and feminist research, I now turn to discuss feminist methodologies within social research and the tensions that underpin them. Within this topic, I firstly explore Harding's take on the existence of a separate feminist method. Secondly, I focus on the critiques of poststructuralism in feminist research in relation to: 1) the question of agency; 2) the all-encompassing and homogeneous subject of 'woman'; and 3) the question of objectivity and situatedness.

Discussing the question whether a distinctive feminist method exists, Harding (1988) argues against it, stating the increasing preoccupation with method works to mystify the most compelling elements in feminist research: its processes. However, Harding (1988) also argues that the question of there being a feminist method is a messy one. Harding (1988: 2) states debates around feminist method have been mixed (and mistaken) with issues of methodology and epistemology, therefore making it difficult to ascertain clarity when discussing method or looking for its novelty. Consequently, Harding (1988: 2) argues feminist research makes use of the three methods of social inquiry, which she lists as listening to people, observing behaviour and examining records. Nevertheless, it is not so much about which method is employed but how they are carried out which makes feminist research "strikingly different" (2) from the rest of social research. In Harding's view, to position the existence of a feminist method as a reality produces a false sense of unity in how feminist scholars engage in research. Harding, therefore, argues that what is unique about feminist research is the multiple ways they develop, improve and transform traditional inquiring techniques to attend to new methodological and epistemological questions.

These methodological-epistemological questions are manifold. St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) approach these questions as located under the 'post'. The authors define the 'post' as a time where all things that were believed to be substantial and strong, such as truth, knowledge, reason, etc., were troubled and complicated. Poststructuralism in particular, they argue, has 'worked the ruins' of humanism's accounts of these concepts and has explored fundamental tensions concerning the instability of one final truth and its implications for feminist knowledge. However, despite the initial nihilistic sense of despair, feminist researchers have started asking questions that allowed them to produce different knowledge, or produce

knowledge differently. I locate my thesis under the poststructuralist theoretical framework, as I contribute to producing "different structures of intelligibility" (St. Pierre and Pillow 2000: 2) that are not reducible to metanarratives (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). Rather, this thesis pays attention to the different fabrics of social life, therefore imbricating both 'me', the researcher, and the research (Clifford and Marcus 1986).

Ramazanoglu (1993) argues the areas of thought that have been described as poststructuralist (or postmodernist) are in fact, Foucauldian (1). In my thesis, a Foucauldian discourse analysis underpins the analysis of the research, which allows me to identify the broader social discourses (e.g. postfeminist, neoliberal) shaping the circulation of affect and the participants' sense-making of lad culture in HE. In employing a Foucauldian approach to interpret the students' voices, I need to also consider some of the tensions that appear when using Foucault in feminist research. Ramazanoglu (1993) notes the extreme relevance of Foucault's work for social inquiry research, and more specifically, for feminist research, through his accounts on power relations, subjectivity and sexualities. She argues, however, that Foucault's theory also poses a challenge to feminism in a number of ways, which I explore later in the chapter. From the absence of a gender axis in his work, to a complete distortion and disregard of feminist work concerning identity and the material existence of women (which Foucault viewed as a form of biologically essentialist rationalization), feminist engagement with Foucauldian ideas are often problematic.

Despite this, Ransom (1993) argues one of Foucault's most important contributions for feminist research is the challenge to biologist conceptualisations of the body. The body, for Foucault, is not something given and marked biologically, it is socially constructed. This produces a view of the body as not homogeneous in terms of biology, rather as pluralistic, multiple and socially embedded. In this light, the object of much feminist research (i.e. gender power) as the common ground for male oppression was challenged, as was the view of 'woman' and 'man' as a fixed category for feminist struggle (Ransom 1993: 127). This move allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the multiplicity of women's experiences and their differences. However, this debate on the plurality of power opened up further questions. For example, how do we engage in feminism without a fixed category of woman (and man), and hold onto the truth of gendered oppression, when this largely assumes a dichotomised sexual difference? One notable response to this question has been posed by Butler, to whom I turn below.

Butler (1990) argues against the feminist critique of oppression as emanating from a totalising and singular source. In efforts to totalise the multiplicity of women experiences and identities under the category of 'woman', feminism, for Butler (1990), has also singularised oppression locating it under a masculinist signifying economy. As Butler (1990) claims, the identification of the enemy of feminism as singular "mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms" (18). Butler (1990) explains oppression is not irreducible to gender, as it can and does operate in relation to class, race, etc. However, Butler also argues against understanding oppression as located on horizontal and vertical matrixes. Butler argues, listing oppression on a horizontal axis does not account for its convergence and interrelationship with the social field. With regards to the vertical axis, Butler states it assumes a hierarchized understanding of oppression where oppressions are ranked and subordinated to each other. Assuming a unified subject of 'woman', for example, leads to the singularization of oppression.

In moving forward, Butler (1990) argues for the need to rethink the subject of feminism. Butler (1990) claims filling the category of 'woman' with components such as sexuality, class, etc. in order to account for the multiplicity of experience, is wrong. Instead, she favours the belief of rendering the category of 'woman' as incomplete, therefore serving as a site of contested meaning. Butler (1990) then questions the prerequisite of unity for effective feminist political action. For her, 'unity' configures a form of solidarity at the level of identity exclusively formed on the basis of the identity of 'woman'. This, for Butler, closes the forming of a solidarity that could disrupt the borders of identity of the unified category of 'woman', as it does not recognise the multiplicity of women identities. Butler (1990) claims that moving away from the foundationalist idea of unity underscoring feminist action might have certain benefits, arguing:

> "*Without the compulsory expectation that feminist actions must be instituted from some stable, unified, and agreed-upon identity, those actions might well get a quicker start and seem more congenial to a number of "women" for whom the meaning of the category is permanently moot.*" (1990: 21)

In this extract, Butler argues that a feminism that considers the multiplicity of women identities might see an increased success and support in its actions. The debates around the category of 'woman' in feminist research initiated by Foucault and developed in detail by Butler, also shed light on the workings of power in society, which has been a crucial theorisation for feminist

research (Ransom 1993; McNeil 1993; Ramazanoguly 1993; Deveaux 1994; King 2004; McLaren 2002; Alcoff 2018). For Foucault (1982; 1978), power is productive and multiple – it is not exercised in a top-down manner, rather, power is invisible and is exercised in all levels of social strata.

Providing the existence of power multiply distributed across society, Foucault also famously argued, "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (1978: 95). Concerning this, resistance to power is equally manifold and scattered, and it cannot exist outside power. Consequently, both power and resistance are entrenched in a symbiotic relationship, where one cannot exist without the other. In this regard, Foucault explained resistance is only exercised within the limits of power, always "inside" of power, never "escaping" it (95). For some feminist researchers, Foucault's conceptualization of power and resistance was seen as diminishing women's agency against male patriarchal oppression, blurring the lines between the power employed by the dominators and the dominated, and even ignoring the gendered dimensions of the body (Harstock 1990; McLaren 2002; Daveux 1994). Consequently, Foucault's concept of power has been criticised as limited and exclusionary (McNay 1991), particularly in relation to agency (Daveaux 1994).

Daveaux (1994) argues that Foucault's reluctance to assign agency to the individual results in a reading of the subject as passive, established by power and "immobilized in a society of discipline" (228). Daveaux (1994) argues the docile bodies paradigm in relation to the non-existence of individual agency proves to be specifically detrimental for women as it erases their potentiality for dismantling the established social order. Despite these criticisms, Ransom (1993) highlights that Foucault's concept of power and agency is de-centered (Caldwell 2007), and that this does not in fact undermine women's ability to challenge oppression. For Ransom, it foregrounds subjectivity, rendering it as a site contested in discourse (134). Consequently, seeing the subject through social and historical conditions should not be taken as limiting women's actions, but rather, as the precondition for these actions. Ransom (1993: 135) argues, "it is because, and not in spite of, our embeddedness in discursive practices that political action is possible".

Working between the tensions of power, agency and feminism, Harding (1987; 2001) and Harding and Norberg (2005) propose a feminist epistemology and methodology concerned

with what she calls “studying up”. Harding’s (2005) studying up involves reconfiguring research to study the powerful and their practices, their policies and institutions, instead of only focusing on those seen as subjected to the powerful. Mohanty (2003: 511) explains research that begins from the interests of the marginalised will “read up the ladder of privilege”. This, for Harding (2005), would enable researchers to identify the intrinsic workings of power and its effects in shaping social relations. As a result, the researcher would gain a more comprehensive understanding of how lives are governed, not by powerful individuals, but by institutions and institutional practices that are invisible in our everyday lives (2005: 2011).

For Harding (1993), another crucial point for feminist research, particularly with regards to methodological concerns, is the question of objectivity. In her work, Harding (1993; 2005) theorises a ‘strong objectivity’ and describes it as a form of objectivity posited in contrast to scientific objectivity. Harding (1993) conceptualises ‘strong objectivity’ as considering research biases and researchers’ predispositions. For Harding, the belief of erasing the researcher’s fingerprints from the research is an illusion of objectivity. Instead of participating in the desperate attempt at neutrality, Harding suggests adopting a strong objectivity based on the complete incorporation of women’s experiences. According to Harding (1993) and Smith (1987), feminist knowledge founded on women’s experiences is socially situated, therefore leading to a situated knowledge, to use Haraway’s (1988) terminology, which also considers the researchers’ social determination. As a result, Harding (1993) argues, this would set the grounds for maximising researchers’ objectivity, providing that the inclusion of different knowledges (e.g. women’s knowledge) and its social situatedness challenges traditionalist and masculinist approaches to research.

The question of objectivity and situatedness in feminist research has been debated by a number of theorists, particularly by those participating in standpoint feminism (Hennessy 1993; Hekman 1997; Harding 1993; Smith 1997; Hill Collins 1990). However, one of the most important accounts was given by Haraway (1988). Haraway positions herself directly against notions of objectivity that promise transcendence. Rather, Haraway suggests rejecting the notion of scientific objectivity altogether by instead producing situated knowledges and partial perspectives. What is different in Haraway’s approach to feminist objectivity in contrast to Harding’s is the importance that Harding placed on women situated experiences as minimising the bias in the research in a patriarchal society (1993: 59-61). This resonates clearly with Hartsock’s (1983) account of objectivity, as she argued women’s experience was ‘real’ due to

their condition as oppressed groups. For Hartsock, the ruling group's vision of reality is unavoidably partial and limited as a consequence of their elevated status, which prevents them from seeing the reality of human relations (Hekman 1997). This further resonates with hooks (1984), Rollings (1985) and Gorelick's (1991) arguments on the need to produce knowledge from the margin to the centre, creating a view from below: starting at the periphery of society and making the way to the centre of privilege. In opposition, Haraway warns against romanticising the vision of the less powerful, rendering their position as also in need of critical study (1988: 584). In this light, Haraway perceives all accounts of reality, regardless of who professes them, as necessarily partial, limited and situated, allowing us "to become answerable for what we learn how to see" (1988: 583).

By interrogating work on objectivity and situatedness as the only way to carry feminist research, Lather (2013; 2007; 1993) explores the contested idea of validity. After the crisis of representation put an end to pure presence (1993: 675), Lather asks where legitimacy could reside and most importantly, questions if our obsession as researchers with legitimacy and validity could be framed under the disciplinary regimes of confession (2007; 1993). The crisis of representation emerged as a poststructural theoretical-methodological concern over linguistic techniques of representation used to produce knowledge. The linguistic turn centred language as crucial in philosophy, therefore marking its hegemony as a transparent agent (Williamson 2007). However, poststructuralist thought influenced by social constructivism rejected the idea of language as a transparent tool to represent knowledge and viewed it as socially constructed (Gough and Price 2004). As a result, language was de-centred, however not delegitimised, in order to pay attention to other forms of non-representational knowledge production, such as material ontologies (MacLure 2013) and affect.

In the midst of this methodological tension, Lather suggests reframing validity as not relying on models of truth or transparency (2007: 119). Lather argues there is a need to question representation and establish a dialogue involving the decision of which regime of truth to locate the research within and "what mask of methodology to follow" (120). As Fine (1994) argues, self-interrogation is crucial, particularly for feminist researchers, as it involves a rethinking of the politics of power shaping our study. In Fine's words:

> "*That we [researchers] are human inventors of sonic questions and repressors of others, shapers of the very contexts we study, co-participants in our interviews,*

> *interpreters of others' stories and narrators of our own, is sometimes rendered irrelevant to the texts we publish. While feminists vary in how we manage this treacherous territory, we all manage it*." (1994: 14)

Within this treacherous territory of representation and power hierarchies, Lather offers some ways forward for the crafting of mask methodologies that engage in counter-discourses that trouble validity, the researcher's authority and representation itself (1993). I turn to these below to outline the feminist methodological underpinnings of my own research and the tensions that emerged: from producing partial knowledges, to dealing with the power conflicts in the dichotomy of researcher/researched.

3.2.1 HOW? FEMINIST METHODOLOGY IN THE THESIS

In my research I draw on Lather (2007; 1993) to take on board and navigate the tensions highlighted by previous feminist researchers. Firstly, I would like to give account of my own location and situatedness within this research. The reason why I believe it is crucial for this research to include a reflexive account of myself it is due to my lack of desire to theorise the world in an act of omnipotence and immortality (Haraway 1988). Rather, I strive to understand how my specific ways of seeing create a different type of knowledge; one that is partial and situated. To do this, I have started off Chapter 1 by reflecting on my own relation to lad culture and how this has shaped this research. In doing this, I put into practice Lather's naked methodology (2007). For Lather, a naked methodology does not encompass a presentation of the self as a transparent researcher as this would be impossible. Drawing on Nietzsche, Lather argues visible nakedness disguises a certain will to power (2007: 17). Abandoning the urge to uncover hidden meanings in the data (e.g. deciphering what the participants are *really* saying) involves a re-evaluation of the naked truth, meaning, the totalist claims of truth. This re-evaluation enables us to produce "knowledge without guarantee, to learn to live without absolute knowledge, within indeterminacy' (17). In my study, I adopt this methodological approach as I consider it one of the very few ways feminist research can take accountability for the power dynamics that influence the research process and the researcher's position within it. Similarly, I do not see my partial perspective, constructed as a consequence of my own locatedness, as a negative and limiting factor for the research. In fact, I view it as enriching, grounding and enabling the multiplicity of voices that form and inform this research project.

Acknowledging my own partiality and my limited production of knowledges made me engage with the data differently, rejecting the gluttony vision from nowhere (Haraway 1988). Elsewhere Lather discusses this as "getting lost in data" (2007). According to Lather, getting lost involves understanding the researcher as epistemologically curious and unknowing, not presuming any privilege or special signifier in order to be able to think differently (2007: 12). In adopting getting lost in the data as a methodological approach, Lather argues different types of knowledge appear because of the newly found vulnerability of the researcher, who was traditionally at the top of the research power hierarchy. Facing this vulnerability makes the researcher, in this case myself, reduce and de-centre their power within the research setting and dynamics. It also allows me to interrupt the illusion of absolute knowledge and accept the impossibility of mastering the research.

Further attempting to de-centring my power within this research, I have employed the data collection method of 'cooperative inquiry' (see Chapter 4 for a detailed explanation), an articulation of so-called 'action research' (Reason and Riley 2007). Cooperative inquiry, as a research method, does not aim to uncover an objective or transcendental truth. Instead, its main goal is to reach a "practical knowing" that will allow the participants and the researcher to thrive (Reason and Riley 2007: 168). In my research, I use cooperative inquiry to move beyond master narratives and toward localised knowledges, thus laying the ground for what they call an "extended epistemology" (170) that breaks positivist claims to truth and embraces different ways of knowing "as persons encounter and act in their world" (170). In employing cooperative inquiry, my intention is to blur the binary of researcher/researched, allowing for a less hierarchical approach to the voices of the participants. However, regardless of my desire to disrupt the researcher's hierarchical power by rendering the participants as co-researchers and co-authors (Reason and Riley 2007), this proved to be impossible.

As the researcher of this study, not only do I determine the topic to be explored and how, but I also privilege from the benefits of its authorship: acquiring a doctorate degree, something the participants, regardless of their crucial contributions, will not achieve from their role in the data production. In my opinion, while it is important to acknowledge and challenge the hierarchical relationships reproduced in research, it is just as relevant to note the unfeasibility of a complete overcoming of these power structures due to the formal requirements of a PhD. Not recognising this impossibility would make me believe in an illusion of emancipation from power hierarchies shaping the research process. Nevertheless, this does not mean that as a

researcher, I stop trying to level the playing field and working towards a double(d) science (Lather 2007). Lather describes her concept of 'double(d) science' by drawing on Butler's (1990) notion of 'subversive repetition', which refers to an act that in its necessary repetition displaces that which enables it. Lather's double(d) science therefore proposes a working within the parameters of social research and therefore, reproducing the same parameters, however in a way that troubles them: working within and against simultaneously.

To return to the issue of method, it is important to note the tensions that arise when using cooperative inquiry in a feminist research framed by poststructuralist concerns. A cooperative inquiry approach to research is humanist and is grounded in liberationist thinking since it aims for the participants' emancipation (Reason and Riley 2007). This intrinsically collides with the poststructuralist framework of my research and its antifoundational and anti-humanist approach to knowledge production. My goal in entangling such uncomplimentary approaches is to complicate previous social and cultural research, pushing it through traditionalisms to create an innovative way of doing critical feminist research that is fit to study present societies in "revolting times" (Fine 2016).

The debates discussed above regarding women's emancipation as one of the crucial aims of feminist research ultimately come down to the concept of agency. Below, I offer a brief insight into the debates in feminist research regarding the concept of agency. I follow this by providing an explanation of what I understand for agency and how I manage the tension between its humanist and anti-humanist underpinnings in the thesis.

3.3 AGENCY DEBATES

In this part, I discuss contemporary debates on the concept of 'agency'. Two of the most prominent thinkers have been Foucault and Butler. While I don't align fully with either, I think is important to discuss their arguments in order to explore the ways they have been taken up in feminist research. In this regard, I overview the criticisms feminist theorists have developed against Foucauldian and Butlerian understandings of agency, rendering them as negative. Following this, I outline my own understanding of agency alongside the concept of 'affect'.

The concept of 'agency' within feminist research has been extensively theorised and heavily contested (Ransom 1993; McNay 2003). As already discussed in the previous sub-section of

the chapter, Foucault's work on power, subjectivity and agency has established a division amongst feminist researchers: from those that view Foucault's work as constructing the subject as a tabula rasa written on exclusively by societal discourses which they cannot change, and those that see it as illuminating the inner workings of power relations and the potentialities for resistance. However, the issues with conceptualising a notion of agency are not limited to the work developed by Foucault, but also are directed towards Foucauldian-inspired thinkers such as Judith Butler, whose account of agency has been described as producing a negative understanding of subject construction (McNay 2003; 2004).

Butler's theorisation of agency sits closely with the Foucauldian subject created and enacted through discursive practices and power relations. The process of subject formation, subjectification, for Foucault, is underpinned by a contention between freedom and constraint. Foucault argues, power can only be exercised over free subjects, "insofar as they are free" (1982: 790). In this regard, freedom is constructed as the condition of possibility, or even precondition for the exercise of power and the establishing of power relations. While some feminist researchers interpreted this formulation of power as opening the possibility of agency for women (Ransom 1993), others rendered it as negating the gender bias of power and the consequences this has had for women's lives in enduring patriarchal oppression (McNay 1991; 1992; Henderson 2007; King 2004). Following this, McNay (1992) accuses Foucault of refusing to consider the historical gendered dimensions of disciplinary regimes. For her, this led to treating the subjected body without paying attention to the difference in gender. As a consequence, male and female bodily experiences are presented by Foucault in relation to power as undifferentiated in terms of the exercise of power. For McNay (1991; 2003), not only does this theorisation of power deny women's historical oppression in society, it also produces a negative paradigm of subjectification where the possibility of agency is always deferred and never fulfilled. McNay (1991) argues this forecloses a feminist conceptualisation of agency as productive and generative.

Butler's theorisation of her concept of 'performative agency' is met with similar criticisms. Butler's theory of agency is informed by Foucault's idea of discourse as productive. This concept is crucial for her to develop her idea of 'performativity', understood as producing that which it voices (Butler 1993). In this regard, 'discursive performativity' is productive as it enacts what it names. For example, in naming myself a woman, I produce myself as one. What her concept of 'discursive performativity' brings forward is the understanding that there is no

doer behind the deed, particularly concerning gender identity (1990). One creates oneself entirely through discourse, and consequently, one also is constituted as a subject. This performative construction of identity – especially gender identity – also underscores her understanding of agency. For Butler, agency is not a property of people or a tool to change their social reality. There is no rational, intentional and knowing subject a priori (Youdell 2006), insofar as agency is not a human possession, but the presupposition of a "purpose unintended by power, operating in contingency and reversal to this power" (Butler 1997: 15). The next question to ask is: how is this form of agency enacted? How does Butler's discursive agency work? For Butler, agency works in the discursive realm within a process of repetition. According to Butler, a subject is always involved in their performative constitution, and therefore, the Butlerian subject is never finished, it is repeatedly constituted in subjection, entangled in power relations that create the subject (Butler 1997: 94). It is in this constant repetition of one's identity and existence where agency resides: "repetition establishes a domain of risk" (28) and opens up the possibility of change. Repetition is the condition of possibility of agency (1990; 1997).

While Butlerian performative agency has been hailed for broadening the understanding of the workings of gender construction as always involving the potentiality of change, it has also been deemed "deeply antihumanist" (Fraser 1995: 67) insofar as it is understood, according to McNay (2003: 143), as "a quality of structures rather than subjects". For McNay (1999: 2003), Butler's agency lacks a willingness to go beyond both a linguistic model of identity and the notion of non-identity, as it is described in a non-voluntarist and subject-less way. It is the elimination of the subject within agency that McNay (2003) argues makes Butler's theorisation lack a hermeneutic interpretation of the active and creative dimensions of subject formation. As a result, Butler's account also misses, for McNay, an exploration of how the imposing of norms is always somewhat exceeded through the process of living through them and living them.

In my thesis, I build on Butler's concept of agency underpinned by Foucauldian influences and conceptualise it bringing it together with affect. I unpack how agency is understood, interpreted and brought together with affect in what follows.

The understanding of agency I work with in the thesis is informed by the anti-humanist formulations provided by both Butler and Foucault, but also shaped by affect in paying

attention to the spectrum in which agentic capacities emerge and act (Coole 2005). I render agency as sitting between the amorphous, which characterises it as always and already displaced (McNay 2003), and the social – the collective, structures, and feelings. I conceptualise agency within the affective, meaning, I understand affect as shaping agency, as providing the potentiality for a non-individualistic agency that folds into discourse. This agency is therefore both discursive and always exceeding the individual. However, I also see it as transpersonal, corporeal and intersubjective: agency in a spectrum of different modalities and capacities that co-exist, therefore rejecting previous accounts that presented their own theories in a dichotomised and determinist fashion (e.g. agency as belonging to discourse; agency as belonging to the people). I see agency as inaccessible and ephemeral and as slipping into discourse through the participants' voices. Adopting this particular understanding of agency opens up the possibility of mapping agentic capacities that appear in social interactions and events (Coole 2005). As a result, this concept of agency helps me in my feminist predisposition in looking for the possibilities of change and ways out. Consequently, in analysing the participants' accounts I am able to map the agentic capacities they mobilised without reducing my approach to agency within the individual.

In the analysis, drawing on Mohanty (1988) and Gill (2007), I am also cautious of falling on a representation of agency that dichotomises its exercise in those seen as possessing it, and those seen as devoid from it. For Mohanty, this distinction is underpinned by colonial Western values producing what she calls 'Third World Women' as passive and non-agentic. This binary concept of agency, Mohanty explains, is key to the spatial hierarchies established by Western feminist thought. Not only do Western understandings of agency put in place an exclusionary mapping of it – who has it and who doesn't – but, according to Mahmood (2005), they also deem as agentic behaviours only those that directly resist social norms, therefore measuring agency by its distance to them (Hemmings and Treacher-Kabesh 2013).

This critique of agency is further reflected in Gill's (2007) criticism of Duits and van Zoonen's (2006) article on female agency and sexualisation. In their work, Duits and van Zoonen (2006) juxtapose the headscarf and the g-string as tools for female agency, within a society where female identities are heavily regulated. Engaging critically with this, Gill (2007) argues their concept of agency falls in western-centric individualistic narratives that largely ignore the socio-cultural contexts, underpinned by neoliberal and postfeminist ideas, in which this agency is articulated. For example, Gill (2007) explains girls' "choice" of wearing g-strings needs to

be interpreted in relation to the cultural context that determines the modes for "sexualized self-presentation" which are also shaped by particular commercial pressures (79).

In order to escape this, Mahmood suggests understanding agency through attachments and negotiations that are intersubjective (2005: 154-155). A mapping of agency that integrally incorporates an understanding of it as distributed and shared enables me to escape the Western feminist narrative of heroines and other-subjects in need of saving (Hemmings and Treacher-Kabesh 2013). Consequently, agency in this thesis is reconfigured, it is not pinned down to particular bodies or actions as previous theories of agency suggest, rather, is mapped in between situations, negotiations and spaces as agentic capacities, opening up potentialities for resistance in the participants' everyday life. This allows for a richer understanding of agency as a relationship that is never fixed or static, but always in the process of changing and getting distributed, therefore moving away from dichotomised theorisations of what is or is not agentic.

The concepts of affect and agency, along with the implementation of a feminist methodology in the thesis, not only shaped the analysis of the participants' voices, meaning, my interpretation of their sense-making in relation to lad culture; but also had a significant influence in the data collection process. In the next chapter, I explore the tensions and negotiations that emerged during the data collection process. First, I outline the method used to collect the data, cooperative inquiry, and the intersectional approach taken. I also explore the figures and positions of the researcher/researched within it. Second, I move onto the participants and introduce the different groups that took part in the study. I offer observations on my interpretation of the discussions with each group and reflect on the topic of race, as it appeared to be a difficult issue for the participants to engage with. Finally, I explore the process I undertook in mapping agency and affect across the students' voices and the difficulties I encountered along the way.

Chapter 4. Methodological Implications: Data, Voices and Tensions

In the previous chapter on methodology, I explored my ontological and epistemological positions. Following a feminist and poststructuralist epistemology, I have underlined the current tensions and ongoing debates within the field of affect studies followed by my own outline of affect. I have also highlighted the feminist underpinnings of my thesis by analysing my own attempt at de-centring myself as the power and authoritative figure within the research. Following the discussion of feminist methodology, I have outlined the ontological questions and discordances sitting at the centre of agency through exploring Foucault and Butler's theory and the criticism the authors faced from feminist researchers. Then, I offered my own understanding of agency as 'agentic capacities', drawing on Coole (2005). On the basis of this methodology, I build on the discussions of affect, agency and feminist methodologies to explore the multiple methodological implications of my thesis. In this section, I outline the data collection process and participants, and the ways I have attempted to craft feminist-inspired methods where the concepts of affect and agency shaped and informed the study.

4.1 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected for this research through the use of cooperative inquiry as a method. Below, I offer the rationale for its use. I do this, first, by highlighting the opportunities of employing cooperative inquiry for the purpose of this research, and second, by exploring the hierarchical power dynamics that were troubled, yet somewhat reinforced as an inevitable consequence of research. Following this, I explore the intersectional approach taken in the thesis.

As introduced from an epistemological perspective in the previous chapter, for the purposes of data collection, I have employed the method of cooperative inquiry, an articulation of action research underpinned by liberationist and humanist thinking (Reason and Riley 2007; Riley and Scharff 2013) (for a discussion on how this humanist thinking is interpreted under the thesis' poststructuralis frame, see chapter 3). A core value of cooperative inquiry is its participatory approach. Under this paradigm, participants are constructed as co-researchers and co-creators of the study, both contributing to the decisions shaping the research and the topics inquired (Reason and Riley 2007). The epistemological standpoint underpinning this logic is what Reason and Riley (2007) call an 'extended epistemology', which aims at producing forms of knowing that are based on the experiential and practical; knowing through encounters. These

multiple types of knowing begin at the contingent relation between the self and other, within a social institution or group, through participation (Reason and Riley 2007; Shotter 1993).

The main objective of cooperative inquiry as a data collection method is to produce knowledge that is useful and empowering for those involved. This goal is inextricably linked to cooperative inquiry's foundational concern for power and powerlessness, and its aim of exploring the power dynamics that shape, not only the production of knowledge, but the consequences this bears on less favoured communities worldwide (Reason and Riley 2007: 171). Reason and Bradbury (2001: 9) argue participation enables people to contribute to the decision-making process of knowledge production, hence amplifying the voices of those that had been muted as a result of different inequalities, such as classism, racism, and sexism.

For this participation and consequent empowerment to be realised, Reason (2002) and Reason and Riley (2007) outline the logic of cooperative inquiry as based on four different phases of action and reflection, each concerned with a particular procedure by which all co-researchers (including the researcher herself) observe and introspect on their own experiences. These phases are: experiential knowing, based on knowing through empathy after a first face-to-face encounter with a person; presentational knowing, referring to first forms of expression of this knowing through the retelling of a story or the employment of artistic practice (e.g. drawing); propositional knowing, which draws on specific concepts and ideas; and practical knowing, consummating the previous knowings into a particular action (Reason 2002). In my employment of this method, I combined these circles in different sessions: I did not establish a fixed plan, each meeting with the participants followed a semi-structured and open-ended scheme of questions/themes. However, all the cycles described by Reason were reflected in the process, therefore shaping the data collected according to the method's principles.

My first reason for engaging with this method is in part due to its resonance with the feminist concerns mentioned in the previous chapter of de-centering hierarchical powers in research as a way to craft a more horizontally structured project. My decision to employ group-based methods over individual and personal interviews is based on two points. First, it was my objective to move away from narrativized and individualised accounts of resistance and power that feed the idea of resistance as located on the individual. Second, my aim was to use a method which reflected the spaces where lad culture emerged. Much of the literature (discussed in Chapter 2) indicates that lad culture exists predominantly in students' social life.

Consequently, the main form of data collection for this research is based on a participatory method, cooperative inquiry, as it allowed for an intersubjective means of data collection that supports and supplements feminist methodologies (Godden 2017; Gouin, Cocq and McGavin 2011; Joyappa and Miartin 1996).

The use of cooperative inquiry also permitted me to de-stabilise my position as a researcher, challenging the figure of authority and influence, since the method opened up the possibility of doing research with, rather than on people (Heron and Reason 2001). My de-centering as an authoritative researcher was done through the deeming of participants as co-researchers, but also through my own active participation in the group discussions. In an attempt at weaving the dichotomised hierarchies based on the researcher/the researched in the research field, the participants became co-researchers and simultaneously, I became co-participant in the meetings. Reason and Riley (2007) explain cooperative inquiry is a human process. For this reason, I involved myself in the conversations that emerged in the meetings. In doing this, I added my voice to the group talks, not from a position of power or expert, rather, from a position of vulnerability. I shared my own experiences with lad culture with all the groups as a means to initially 'break the ice' in discussing private topics, but also to attempt to create an intimacy[10] that allowed for a partial erasure of the power dynamics present in my identity as the researcher, and hence, the one looking at, never the one being looked at. I was, therefore, on the inside looking in (Greene 2014). Despite my participation in the conversations, I decided to relegate myself to a secondary position regarding the analysis. In this work, I do not analyse myself, as carrying out a self-introspection of lad culture is not one of my research objectives and doing it would take away from the available space to explore the participants' voices. Therefore, in my research, I do not become the focus of the study (even though, as I note in the Introduction of this thesis, I have engaged in this process during my MA).

In engaging in the research in such a way, I constructed my researcher self as definitely partial and situated, hence engaging with feminist methodological dilemmas regarding one's own situatedness. In this research, knowledge, or knowing, was not created by me, rather, it was co-constructed through dialogue between all of the participants, including myself. hooks (1989: 131) notes "dialogue implies talk between two subjects, not the speech of subject and object.

[10] For a full discussion on the ethics of intimacy and friendship in social research, please see Duncombe and Jessop (2012).

It is a humanizing speech, one that challenges and resists domination". Establishing a shared dialogical foundation for the data collection resulted in the blurring of the hierarchized lines of research and the emergence of group-based co-construction of knowledge.

In what follows, I give an account of a key approach to my data collection process: intersectionality. I construct my engagement with feminist practices of de-centring power as challenging traditional research standards. Within the research context of lad culture, my study situates itself as addressing a very important gap where there has been a significant limited focus on the experiences of white cis-heterosexual British male and female students. My research pushes beyond this and incorporates a feminist intersectional approach that broadens the scope, not only to include BAME, non-British and non-heterosexual students, but to consider their experiences and accounts as crucial to the understanding of the workings of lad culture. Below, I further explore the workings of an intersectional approach in this thesis.

4.1.1 INTERSECTIONAL VOICES

Despite the great importance of previous work on lad culture in providing crucial information on the figure of the lads and their context, either in schools or HE (e.g Jackson and Dempster 2009; Phipps and Young 2013), this body of research tends to be confined to exploring specific groups, therefore overlooking what Crenshaw (1991: 1242) calls "intragroup" differences, such as the ones of race, gender identity and sexual orientation. As a consequence, the understanding of lad culture provided in prior research is undoubtedly relevant and offers a great starting point to keep on building, paying particular attention to how different intersections of institutions of oppression are juxtaposed in relation to lad culture. My research develops this by introducing an intersectional approach through illuminating the accounts of students from different genders, nationalities, ethnicities and sexualities. I am careful not to present this as an 'inclusion', as that might suggest the voices of these students are being merely added to the broader white cis-heterosexual discussion. To avoid an understanding of my intersectional approach as solely an add-on, I use the word illumination. I am not bringing forward these accounts or uncovering them, as that would suggest these stories were inexistent before. They did exist, but were not actively illuminated. Through the use of the word 'illumination' I attempt to explain the intersectional approach of the thesis that I believe is a vital and indispensable part of the research.

Crenshaw (1989) explains the concept of intersectionality as the diverse ways through which race and gender interact, therefore shaping the life experiences of people, more particularly, of women of colour[11] (Black, Latina, Asian, Native-American). Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality argued that the lives of women of colour could not be understood through a single focus on either race or gender, as their position as women and of colour[12] overlapped, therefore needing a theoretical tool that explored the intersection of structures of oppression. From her first outlining of the theory of intersectionality, Crenshaw (1991) has developed it further, paying particular attention to factors such as sexuality, class and human mobility. Crenshaw (1991) explains her specific and overarching focus on both gender and race are not to be understood as the only frameworks to make sense of the experiences of women of colour, but rather as highlighting the need "to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (1991: 1242). Detailing the importance of the development and usage of intersectionality in feminist research, Crenshaw (1991) also enumerates the problems underpinning identity politics. According to Crenshaw (1991), one of the main problems of identity politics is ignoring and, sometimes, neglecting intragroup differences, which consequently contributes to the rising of tensions among groups. For her, this presents an impediment in politicising violence against women as it homogenises women, erasing their particular differences and therefore, failing to consider the diverse gendered and racialized fabrics that pattern their lives.

Drawing on Crenshaw, Hill Collins (2003) states the use of intersectionality enables researchers to pay attention to how social groups are formed through a "constellation of experiences" (208), which is shaped by their location in hierarchized power relations. Within the context of this thesis, I employ an intersectional approach to explore the various ways lad culture affects and shapes diverse students' subjectivities and experiences. In this light, I understand the experiences of, for example, a white cis-heterosexual British female student as completely different from, for instance, those of an Asian non-binary trans student[13]. It is in

[11] Crenshaw made explicit reference to Black women in her work (1991).
[12] For the purposes of this research, I am using the American terms "woman of colour" (WoC) and "people of colour" (PoC) to refer to people from different ethnicities and racial backgrounds. I prefer it over the term "non-white" as seems to label people through their proximity and/or deviation from whiteness (Burke 2018). However, I am also aware of the problematic dimensions of the terms 'WoC' and 'PoC' regarding the homogenisation of an extremely diverse part of the population (Shoneye 2018).
[13] Both gender identities are present among my participants.

the differences of these experiences where employing an intersectional approach becomes crucial, enabling a complete integration of dissimilar accounts and, as a result, a more informed, richer understanding of lad culture and its workings.

In order to adopt a 'successful' intersectional approach, I carried 5 cooperative inquiry groups. The participants of two of them were students of colour, while the remaining three groups were mixed. One of the groups was part of a LGBTQIA+ student union, and participants from other groups also identified as LGBTQIA+. While the majority of the participants were British-born, there were students from other nationalities. Out of the total number of 29 participants: 8 were students of colour, 13 identified as LGBTQIA+ – within this group 2 identified as non-binary and 3 as trans – and 5 were non-British. In what follows, I provide information on each of the cooperative inquiry groups and the participants individually.

4.1.2 MEET THE GROUPS (PART 1)

As already mentioned, five different groups of participants took part in the research process. However, this process was not linear; it was carried out in two parts. Three cooperative inquiry groups were carried out in part one. Two of these were part of two different University Student Union groups, while the remaining one was formed by a group of friends. It was my aim to carry out cooperative inquiry groups formed by students who knew each other and ideally, were friends, or at least acquaintances. The reason for this was the nature of the topics to be discussed in the meetings: very personal experiences dealing with alcohol, sex and/or aggression. Due to this, I decided to recruit groups of friends as I believed the friendship would provide a safe and intimate space for participants to share their stories without the fear of feeling judged or criticised. Following ethical guidelines, all names – including the people and places they talked about in the conversations – have been anonymised. Below, I provide information on the participants and their lives, but keep a certain vagueness to prevent them for being identified. All information that could potentially make them identifiable has been erased from the transcripts. Ethics for the research was approved by the School of Media and Performing Arts at Coventry University (see Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4 for supporting documentation).

The first cooperative inquiry group undertaken in this research was part of a Gender Equality Student Union. I initiated contact with them through email, asking to attend to one of their

meetings in order to talk about my research and the possibility of them taking part in it. During this encounter, they all expressed interest in participating. I attended their Student Union meeting a second time as a way to get to know them better. It was at our third encounter when the data collection started. The group consisted of:

- Anna, white British bisexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Eve, white British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Rose, white British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Mark, white British heterosexual cis man and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Joe, white British heterosexual cis man and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Gwen, Asian South-Korean heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Mary, white British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

The dates in which we meet and their attendance is recorded in the table below (please see Appendix 5 for a table comprising all the participants' demographic information):

Group 1 Meeting Attendance			
	1st Meeting (8th February 2017)	2nd Meeting (16th February 2017)	3rd Meeting (6th March 2017)
Anne	x	x	x
Rose	x		x
Eve	x	x	x
Mark	x	x	x
Joe	x	x	x
Gwen	x		
Mary		x	x

These seven students were close friends and were part of the Gender Equality Student Union. They engaged in social nights together on a regular basis. It is pertinent to note that, by coincidence, they were all students from the Faculty of Arts, which could reflect liberal or left-leaning views in their sense-making. The reason for asking this particular group to take part was due to their interest in gender equality and feminist issues. As a Gender Equality Student Union, they frequently held presentations on gender media representation and women's rights.

I believe this group's composition falls in line with the already acknowledged issues on campus-based feminism, which tends to be quite white (Crossley 2017). Despite only three of them vocally identified as feminists, the group in general had a strong interest in equality and feminism, which would make their participation in my study critical when exploring what such a group understood as the misogynistic and sexist behaviours reproduced by lad culture.

The second cooperative inquiry group was formed by a group of friends and housemates. I already knew this friendship group. Initiation of this group took place via social media where Liv asked about my PhD and offered participation. This group consisted of:

- Liv, Asian Turkish-British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Human Life Sciences.
- Emma, Asian Indian-British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Human Life Sciences.
- Ray, Asian Pakistani-British heterosexual cis man and student at the Faculty of Human Life Sciences.

I met with this group on only one occasion on the 23rd March 2017, in which all of the three participants attended.

All three had been friends for over a decade and shared a house in the student city. The reason for their participation was twofold: first, their specific Asian backgrounds, which I see as playing a key role in their engagement and understanding of lad culture inasmuch as they could identify racist and problematic attitudes underpinning laddish behaviours; and second, due to their apparent lack of interest in feminist issues as none of them identified as feminists even though they expressed being in favour of gender equality.

Members of a LGBTQIA+ Student Union formed the third cooperative inquiry group. I initiated contact with them via email. I asked to attend one of their meetings to talk about my PhD and asked for their participation. In this first encounter, the majority of the group said they would be interested in taking part. Due to time constrains for them – they were in the middle of presidency elections – it was decided that the data collection would start in the following meeting. This group was formed by:

- Tom, white British gay cis man and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Lena, white Polish pansexual non-binary student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

- Farrah, white British pansexual non-binary student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Wend, white British asexual non-binary student at the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.
- Bob[14], white Italian trans non-binary student at the Faculty of Engineering, Environment and Computing.
- Patt, white British pansexual cis woman student at the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.
- Garry, white Polish gay cis man student at the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.
- Dan, white British transgender man and student at the Faculty of Engineering, Environment and Computing.
- Kim, white British lesbian cis woman and student at the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences.
- Jack, Asian Indian-British trans non-binary student at the Faculty of Engineering, Environment and Computing.
- Cassie, white Polish transgender woman student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

The dates in which we meet and their attendance is recorded in the table below:

Group 2 Meeting Attendance			
	1st Meeting (24th March 2017)	2nd Meeting (30th March 2017)	3rd Meeting (6th April 2017)
Tom	x	x	x
Lena	x	x	
Farrah	x	x	
Wend	x	x	x
Bob	x	x	x
Patt	x		x
Gary	x	x	x
Dan	x	x	x
Kim		x	x
Jack			x
Cassie			x

Some of the group members were close friends and engaged in social activities regularly. However, both Jack and Cassie were new to the group and only participated in the third

[14] At the beginning of the first data collection meeting, I offered the students the possibility of chosing their own pseudonym to be used in the thesis. Bob, who identified as trans non-binary, decided to name themselves as 'Bob' ironically. I respected their wishes and decided to refer to this participant as Bob. .

meeting. As a Student Union Society, the members were actively engaged in campus-based activism and were very visible as a result. I asked them for their participation because I believed their position as members of the LGBTQIA+ community would be a determinant factor in how they experienced and made sense of lad culture and also, due to the rising of widening reports exploring how lad culture shapes LGBTQIA+ students' university life (Young-Powell and Gill 2016).

All data from these groups was collected within 3 months. With the exception of the second cooperative inquiry group, I met with the rest of the groups on three different occasions, normally over the period of four weeks. Each meeting lasted between 1 hour and 3 hours. I met with the first group between the 8th February 2016 and 6th March 2017; I only held one meeting with the second group on the 23rd March 2017[15]; the third group's meetings were held between the 24th March 2017 and 6th April 2017.

4.1.3 MEET THE GROUPS (PART 2)

The following section introduces the second stage of data collection. The reason for the continuation of my data collection process was established as one of the outcomes of my PRP Year 1[16]. The subject expert on my board suggested the need for more people of colour and invited me to recruit participants to one of her taught modules where the student body was largely diverse. This second stage of data collection was imperative due to the necessity to have more voices from people of colour, given the intersectional goals of my approach in exploring the different structures of oppression mobilised by lad culture. I decided to continue with the method of cooperative inquiry as it proved to work with the participants, the topic, and myself. In this part of the data collection process, I carried out two more cooperative inquiry groups. The need to continue my data collection demonstrates how research is an emergent process, never actually completed. After finishing the data collection with the fourth group, I reflected on my practice as a researcher and realised the homogeneity of this group, which my contradicted my intersectional goal of illuminating people of colour's experiences with lad culture. Consequently, I felt compelled to continue the data collection with a fifth group, attempting to bring in more people from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. From this, I

[15] I explain why I only held one meeting with this particular group later in the chapter.
[16] Progress Review Panel (PRP) refers to a yearly evaluation of full-time PhD students where they are examined by a board constituted by a subject expert and a chair person.

learned to think of research as a project constantly involved on-going transformations and open to change.

The fourth cooperative inquiry group was formed by a group of classmates. I initiated contact through the help of a lecturer. Given the diverse student body of her class, she invited me to her lecture in order to present my research and recruit participants. However, this did not seem to work as the composition of this group was fairly homogeneous after only having one black woman and 3 white people joining. This group consisted of:

- Ollie, white British heterosexual cis man and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Keith, white British heterosexual cis man and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Belle, black Seychellois-British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Tess, white British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

The dates in which we meet and their attendance is recorded in the table below:

Group 4 Meeting Attendance			
	1st Meeting (5th November 2017)	2nd Meeting (12th November 2017)	3rd Meeting (20thth November 2017)
Ollie	x	x	x
Keith	x	x	
Belle	x	x	x
Tess	x		

Ollie, Keith and Belle knew each other from previous years at University. The three of them were in their fourth year of their degree after having spent one year on Erasmus. Tess, however, was a third-year student and therefore hadn't met the rest of the group before. Although their lack of racial diversity could be coincidental, one way of interpreting this could be the fact that lad culture has been largely been defined by whiteness: lad culture has been constructed as being enacted by white young men, and the reporting of those affected by it has consistently overrepresented white women. The underrepresentation of people of colour in relation to lad culture in both research and media, and the attribution of laddish behaviours to white men might prevent engagement from people of colour as they may not see themselves as the target audience for research on the topic.

The fifth and final cooperative inquiry group was formed by a group of classmates. I first came into contact with two of them in person. After introducing my research to them, they agreed to participate and also suggested inviting another classmate. In the end, the three of them participated. The group was formed by:

- Tori, Asian Indian-British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Jess, Asian Indian-Malawi-British heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Ash, black Gambian-Swedish heterosexual cis woman and student at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

The dates in which we meet and their attendance is recorded in the table below:

Group 5 Meeting Attendance			
	1st Meeting (1st March 2018)	2nd Meeting (8th March 2018)	3rd Meeting (14th March 2018)
Jess	x	x	x
Tory	x	x	x
Ash		x	x

The participants knew each other as they were pursuing the same studies. The reason why I approached them was due to their expressed interest in feminist issues and their diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, as I believed this would have shaped their experiences and engagement with lad culture. I would also add their shared engagement with religion as an influential factor – even though they practiced different ones (Hindu, Muslim and Christian), as it could be argued religion shapes the social spaces students occupy at University and their engagement with and sense-making of student' social life.

I met with the fourth group between 5th November 2017 and 20th November 2017; and lastly, the fifth group's meetings took place between 1st March 2018 and 14th March 2018. I held all meetings at different available rooms within four University buildings – Richard Crossman, Ellen Terry, Charles Ward and The Hub. The meetings with the groups that were part of a Student Union took place in the room they were allocated as a union; for the rest of the groups, with the exception of the second group whom I met at their house, I was in charge of the room bookings to carry out the meetings. To benefit a well-structured analysis, I have not included

groups 2 and 4, since group 2 wasn't successful[17] and group 4 was not diverse enough. However, group 4 is featured in the Cutting In chapters.

4.1.4 MEETING: THE STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

As explained above, I had been in contact with all members of each group to inform them about my research and respond to any questions they had prior to the first meeting. On the first meeting, they were provided with the project information, consisting of an informed consent form, a recording consent form and a group consent form (see Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4 for the consent forms).

Each meeting was based on a semi-structured set of questions. While I reused some of the more general questions for all groups, I tailored specific questions for each group individually to attend to specific tensions and experiences. I brought with me a written structure organising the meetings, normally including open-ended questions and activities. However, this structure was not fixed, as my aim was to follow up on the topics discussed by the participants, therefore allowing them to take control of the conversation. This participatory and open structure, I argue, allowed for the production of a relaxed atmosphere in the meetings and an organic feel to the data.

The first meeting normally set the tone for the second one, and this for the third one. Following the cooperative inquiry guideline, the meetings were concluded with a group reflection and the creation of an action plan. This action plan consisted on a follow-up activity meant to be discussed in-group at the beginning of the following meeting. Action plans were not successful with any of the groups, with only one person in all groups doing them. Nevertheless, they provided a starting point for the second meeting and a specific approach to the topic. For example, the action plan for the second meeting of group 1 was to provide an account – either written or in audio/video format – of a night out, paying particular attention to the space and their interactions (or lack of) with the men they considered lads. Despite only one person bringing a reflexive account, this activity was a useful means of starting off the second meeting.

There was an activity that I asked each group to do, with the exception of group 1 due to research being an emergent process in which reflective cycles lead me to come up with new

[17] I explore this later on the chapter.

ideas to improve my practice as a researcher. The activity I designed consisted of drawing a lad. I carried out this activity at the beginning of the first meeting with groups 2 to 5 as means to break the ice. I provided paper and pens to everyone. This activity not only facilitated the starting of an informal conversation, but it also got the participants thinking about their own understanding and interpretation of the figure of the lad. From this activity, rich and fruitful conversations followed as not all drawings depicted the same type of lad.

The decision to carry out this activity at the beginning of the first meeting was motivated by the necessity to start a general conversation on lad culture drawing from the participants' assumptions. This followed a broader structure shaping the cooperative inquiry process. During this process, I designed each meeting to have a particular focus: the goal of the first meeting was to initiate some preliminary reflections on lad culture and its more superficial dimensions. I structured the second meeting following upon the unresolved tensions or questions that appeared in the first meeting, normally bridging this through the action plan. The third meeting furthered key issues brought up in previous encounters and finished with a reflective stage in which all – myself included – considered the effects (or lack of) lad culture had on them/us. In completing this cycle, my data collection process followed cooperative inquiry guidelines, where the students discussed ways of moving forward and identified strategies they believed could help to tackle lad culture on campuses.

Despite the positive impact employing a method based on cooperation and participation had on my study, both in terms of engaging in a collaborative knowing production and attempting to de-stabilise traditional power hierarchies within the research, I would like to trouble my use of cooperative inquiry by outlining the dilemmas I faced during the process of data collection. I turn to these below.

4.2 UNDOING COOPERATIVE INQUIRY

Employing cooperative inquiry as a method in this research following its humanistic and liberationist participatory principles of collaboration proved to be extremely difficult, if not impossible at certain stages. In this section, I look at the incompatibilities of adopting this approach to research and the tensions within my double position as a researcher and as an active participant during the data collection discussions.

As stipulated earlier in the chapter, one of my main objectives in using cooperative inquiry was to trouble the hierarchical foundations of doing qualitative research, and to create a humane collection process (Reason and Riley 2007). However, this task came undone as it was carried out. From the sketching of my research to the final publication of the work, I am the author of the study and hold significant power over it (Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach 2009). Within the context of the equal and balanced relationships and conversations I attempted to create, my own personal motivations and interests shaped and reproduced the power dynamics underpinning the process. For every one of the meetings I had with the groups, I prepared a set of questions and activities informed by my particular interests and concerns. Despite my commitment to topple hierarchical researcher norms through only creating semi-structured and unfixed meeting designs, this part of the research process still laid in my hands (Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach 2009).

Nevertheless, my power and influence were not exercised in a homogeneous way in all the groups: some groups' negotiation of their own agency and authority was more present than in others, where traditional dichotomised power dynamics were more heavily reproduced. This highlights the clear contestation and resistance to the researcher's authority. The resistance I encountered during the conversations with the participants was carried out in different ways: some students actively participated in posing questions to their colleagues and to myself, while others challenged my assumptions and opinions on lad culture and my research. For example, Anne, a member of group 1, expressed some concern over the validity of my research since it did not include lads' own accounts. In doing this, the participant was vocal, pointing to what she believed to be an incongruency of my study. Another student, Tori, engaged in the question making of the meetings by actively asking other participants about topics she thought were relevant to the discussion, therefore embodying the co-researcher identity facilitated by cooperative inquiry and disrupting the power hegemony held by me.

Episodes like these ones make evident what Karnieli-Miller, Strier and Pessach (2009: 282) suggest when they claim that during the data collection process, the researcher seems to lose both ownership and control of the data, which shifts to be in the hands of the participants. However, this only proves to be partially true. As Kvale (1996) argues, the belief that the researcher might be exempt of power during the data collection is misleading. There were some groups, for example, that accepted my authority as a researcher and were not particularly engaged in the cooperative part of the conversation. The second group waited in silence for

more questions, therefore disrupting the conversational approach of cooperative inquiry, and shaping the meeting into more of a focus group. Consequently, the participants themselves put the hierarchized power that I attempted at overthrowing back in place.

I would argue, then, that the power tensions underpinning the research are never erased, but concealed. de Laine (2000) asserts that building one's data collection through empathy and closeness with the participants in an attempt to disrupt hierarchical boundaries and to increase richer participation might exacerbate participants' vulnerability and exposedness. Similarly, Kvale (1996) declares that kind, warm and empowering data collection processes might conceal power relations exercised under the cover of an equal dialogue. This links to Butler's (1990) criticism of the dialogical model. In her critique, Butler argues that failing to interrogate the power relations shaping dialogic possibilities might risk "relapsing into a liberal model that assumes that speaking agents occupy equal positions of power" (20). As a consequence, the core principles of equality and participation underscoring the practice of cooperative inquiry that I aimed at implementing during the data collection process seem to be at odds with its application in this research. Not only are they at odds, but they seem to come undone as doing research always involves certain hierarchical power relations between the researcher and the researched. However, this does not mean that as researchers, particularly when doing feminist research, we should stop trying to de-centre our authoritative identities. In fact, I would argue, *trying* is crucial. In trying, I attempt at producing engaged, contested and constructive knowledge that challenges hierarchical traditions of knowledge construction.

However, despite these attempts, there was a point in my data collection where I exercised my hierarchical power knowingly. In spite of most groups being successful both in terms of data collection and the application of cooperative inquiry as a method, there was one group in which my attempts failed, consequently leading me to take the decision to stop this group's participation. The second group formed by Liv, Emma and Ray was limited to only one meeting. This was due to various connected reasons: first, the participants did not engage in the conversations as co-theorists, despite having been informed of the conversational approach of cooperative inquiry. From the beginning of the meeting, Liv, Emma and Ray positioned themselves and myself as the researched and researcher respectively. The questions I asked to incite a two-way conversation were responded, sometimes scantily, and never developed into a full discussion. As a result, the talk that took place followed a very traditional structure, where the researcher asks questions and the researched answers them. Second, another problem

encountered with this group was my personal relationship with them. I had known the participants for three years and had shared a student accommodation with them for one year. During this time, our relationship grew closer, however, towards the end of the year, tensions arose. Even though our relationship continued after this year, we drifted apart. It is for this reason why I believe the cooperative inquiry method based on group discussion did not work with this group, as our past history as strained friends framed the meeting, preventing our embodiment as co-researchers participating in rich and fruitful conversations. Another problem was also encountered during my data collection. In this case it was not so much related to the application of cooperative inquiry, but the difficulties faced in attempting to develop a conversation about race and lad culture. I turn to this below.

4.2.1 (NOT) TALKING ABOUT RACE

I posed the question of race across all groups. Put simply, there was resistance to talk about race relations within the context of lad culture (Eddo-Lodge 2017). Among the questions I asked, I would argue the following were the most pertinent ones: "is lad culture something exclusive to white men?" and "are the consequences of lad culture different for white women and women of colour?". Following the research objective of developing an intersectional study on lad culture, I inquired on the topic of race to explore the racial and potentially racist dimensions of lad culture. The responses to such questions varied depending on the groups and the participants themselves. While there were some groups that approached the issue of race in a more organic fashion by inquiring each other about their beliefs and assumptions, such as in the Gender Equality Society (group 1) and the LGBTQIA+ Student Society (group 3), there were other groups who expressed more hesitation to talk about the topic (group 2 and 5).

A particular moment of tension when discussing race occurred in the third meeting I held with group 4. During that meeting, only Keith, white British, and Belle, black Seychellois-British, were present. The question about race was met with initial doubt and an increase of tension, as Belle and Keith defensively argued over the alleged whiteness of lad culture with very differing points of view. This heavily dichotomised discussion was followed by a silence[18]. Seeing the lack of agreement between them, the participants decided to put an end to difficult talk. A

[18] During this conversation regarding the attribution of whiteness to lad culture, Keith argued "*it's just cos there's a lot of white people in the count-cos it's predominantly a white country*". After this comment, a tense silence followed.

partial silence emerged and shaped the rest of the conversation. Despite the particularity of this example, a partial silence on the issue of race and lad culture was also felt in other groups, particularly in group 2. This partial silence seemed to frame the conversations, carefully putting in place the discursive limits of the meetings. During the second meetings with group 5, comprised by 3 young women of colour, I brought up the issue of race on several occasions. The participants discussed what they believed were lad culture's racial implications, however, in a conversation plagued by uncertainty and silences. Racism was only openly discussed when one of the participants shared a personal story of racist aggression. Otherwise, partial silence appeared and stayed penetrating the talk. Discussing race has been a difficult topic to engage with in qualitative research, as it is often met with tension, hush and discursive strategies to avoid the 'race question' (O'Hare 2014; MacDonald 2007). These silences in the research also resonate with Mazzei's work on participants' silence.

Mazzei (2004; 2007a; 2007b) has written about encountering and negotiating silence in educational research. Mazzei's (2007a) research focuses on exploring how a group of teachers perceive what they consider to be 'normal' behaviour in the classrooms. Discussions on race were brought up and taken up with many silences on the part of the teachers. In her work, Mazzei draws on Derrida (1992) and defines specific silences that emerge when working with culturally sensitive subjects, such as sexuality, race and ethnicity, as strategic. Mazzei rejects the common conceptualization of silence as absence, as lacking meaning, for an understanding of silence as productive and full of signification. With this in mind, silence and speech are not understood as oppositional, rather, as complimentary. Following this, Mazzei proceeds to engage in a problematization of silence, beginning with a process of "listening to our selves listening" (2007a: 91). However, Lather (1991) carefully reminds researchers not to engage in a reading of silence that supplants it with the researchers' fears, voice or desires. Rather, Lather (1991) advises us to make space for silences, for its resistances, as well as its interruptions in the text.

In my analysis, I have encountered and negotiated these moments of interruption and disruption. Below, I explore the process that informed and shaped the analysis of the students' voices. Mapping affect, agency and managing the silences in the transcripts proved to be a complicated exercise that involved a constant self-negotiation in order to avoid imposing a view of the data that categorised it in 'useful' and 'not useful'.

4.3 ANALYSING AND MAPPING

My process of analysing the data was divided in three different stages that took place between May 2017 and February 2018. The first one involved the printing of the transcripts and a preliminary reading of them. In the second stage, I colour-coded the data, looking for similarities and differences across the transcripts in an attempt to find in them agentic and affective situations. The third stage involved both a de-centring and subverting of myself as a researcher. Moving away from looking for 'useful' examples of affect and agency, I developed an approach to the data that instead allowed for the mapping of affective and agentic tensions enacted by the participants' voices themselves, rather than by me. I explore this below.

My analysis began with printing off the transcripts as soon as I had finished transcription. Carrying out the transcription work myself was beneficial as I became extremely familiar with the data. After printing the transcripts, I engaged in two types of reading: the first reading involved a spelling-check and reading for errors, therefore not paying particular attention to the content of the transcripts. The second reading comprised a preliminary, yet comprehensive reading of the data. For this, I turned to the audio recordings at times, not only to understand what the transcriptions were telling me, but also to grasp both the discursive context and tonality of what had been said. With this reading, my aim was to get an overall comprehension of the key topics and a superficial identification of the different themes that appeared across the transcripts.

After this initial reading, I engaged in a thorough and exhaustive reading of the data. Considering I had over 300 pages worth of transcriptions, I decided to carry out a coding of the data organised by colours, so the different themes would be easily and visually identified. Through this coding, I aimed at organising the data by topics and themes, both in terms of the similarities and the differences present in it. The colour-coding of the data enabled me to start the process of locating agency and affect in the transcripts, as two of the main coding themes were 'affective' and 'agentic'. Given my goal is to understand the affective consequences lad culture has on HE students' construction of subjectivity and negotiation of agency, it was my aim to locate moments of visible affect and visible agency across the records. However, in determining what counted as affective and agentic, I produced a heavily binarised reading of the students' voices. Not only this, but I also engaged in a misreading and misunderstanding of affect and agency, rendering them as localizable, and therefore reproducing the idea

underpinning humanist qualitative research that argues the voices and accounts are uttered by a unique, stable and essentialist subject (Mazzei 2013). In sum, my engagement with the concepts of affect and agency during my first attempt at coding were erroneous and worked against the poststructuralist framework shaping the thesis.

To correct these mistakes, I started the process of coding again. This time, I took a different route that enabled a more extended vision beyond the individualised voices. Rejecting the bifurcation between affective/non-affective and agentic/non-agentic, provided me with a holistic view of the participants' voices. As a result, my previous compartmentalization of the transcripts into fixed codes transformed into an acknowledgement of the voices as already produced through affective and agentic entanglements. As explored in the previous chapter, my understanding of affect and agency is not circumscribed to the individual, as they both exceed it due to their transpersonal and intersubjective dimensions. However, I do not see this as positioning them outside of discourse, rather, I conceptualise both affect and agency as slipping into discourse and the social. This view of affect and agency informed my analysis: instead of coding, I mapped. My data ceased to be word document after word document of disconnected pieces that needed to be sewed together through theoretical analysis. Instead, the data became an assemblage of voices, stories, theories, affects and agentic capacities that did not need stitching, but rather, required to be plugged in to and mapped (Jackson and Mazzei 2013).

Mapping could be contextualised under the frame of post-coding methodologies in qualitative research (St. Pierre and Jackson 2014). St. Pierre and Jackson's (2014) argue post-coding techniques are those developed by the "posts" (e.g. post-structuralism, post-foundationalism, post-positivism) that, contrary to coding, see data not as brute, contained and categorizable by a knowing subject, but rather, approach it as entangled, unstable and always open to transformation. While this sounds rather vague and quite complex, St. Pierre and Jackson (2014) argue, it is this intricacy that lays the foundation for qualitative research after coding. In their words: "[s]o the work of post-coding analysis cannot be neat, tidy, and contained. Furthermore, it cannot be easily explained either during or after analysis" (2014: 717). In fact, they claim post-coding analysis is a non-method and non-technique, emergent and experimental, that cannot be replicated as it is constantly changing and becoming.

With these caveats in mind, I am attempting to explain how I engaged with the concept of mapping in my practice and what this process looked like in my analysis. First of all, I should flag that my analysis process did not follow a linear progression of reading, identifying themes and topics, and writing. The method I followed was a messy one (Law 2004), and was characterized by rupture and interruptions. The steps I document below regarding my mapping should not be taken as linear. Even though I have attempted to give them order, this sequence was frequently interrupted. For example, reading the data while listening to the audio recordings appears first on the list. However, there were many times that I went back to listen to them as a way to assist my analysis at different points in the process. Hence, me listening to the recordings is not something that was done and finished at the beginning, but something that I carried on doing. This is because mapping does not happen in sequential order, rather, I approach it as a series of analysis techniques that I plug into, at different times, together and separately, and in various orderings in order to break open the data and make new connectives (Mazzei 2014). Despite this, the 'steps' I took might be narrated as such:

1) The analysis began by listening and reading the transcripts together.
2) I underlined passages where I could feel or hear 'affective intensities' (tone used by the participants, reaction by other members – e.g. laughter, shock). I did this in order to create an initial map of where affective elements were evident in the transcripts.
3) I then read the transcripts alone from my position of nakedness (Lather 2007), which means to leave behind the impulse to uncover hidden meanings in the data (e.g. deciphering what the participants are *really* saying). With this, I wanted to pay attention to participants' responses without imposing external meaning that could end up reproducing totalist claims of truth from the researcher. I also took into consideration the context of responses (e.g. group setting, possible pressures to comply to the image others have of them, university cultures shaped by neoliberalism and postfeminist discourses). I did this to avoid reproducing a decontextualization of data into codable elements and in order to see data as entangled with the context where it emerged (St. Pierre and Jackson 2014).
4) The fourth step involved thinking through theory. At this point, I had read the data several times and was extremely familiar with it. I engaged in a further reading of the literature, alongside writing within the transcripts (on margins, on the back pages) theoretical concepts and ideas that I thought could help analyse the participants'

responses. In doing this, I was "reading-the-data-while-thinking-the-theory" (Mazzei 2014: 743).

5) With the data read through theoretical lenses, I engaged in a rather messy reading of the transcripts. I started reading the transcripts interchangeably: one page of one set of group's transcripts followed by a different page belonging to another of the groups. Mixing data, actively interrupting the order, and destabilising the meaning. With this, I was able to see the different ways lad culture was discussed, as well as the groups' connectives, meaning, their points of connection regarding their affective encounters with lad culture. This disruptive reading of the data allowed me to 'get lost' in it (Lather 2007), approaching it as an unknowing subject. Rather than trying to find themes, or to localize affect and agency as I had previously wrongfully attempted to, I wanted to plug data into the mapping assemblage: into theory, into other data, into its socio-cultural context. In doing this as part of my mapping, I was able to get a contextualized holistic view of the data where one set of transcripts did not mean the end of a conversation, but, if read as plugged into other transcripts, opened the possibility of alternative interpretations and different ways of engaging with the responses by asking questions that considered the data as already meaningful, rather than waiting to be given meaning (St. Pierre and Jackson 2014).

Looking at the data as connected to one another and contextualised through theory, I was able to carry out a mapping of the affective experiencing of lad culture and the agentic capacities that were present across the transcripts. I was able to do this inasmuch as I see both affect and agency as folding into discourse and hence, open to analysis. In this part of the analysis process, I brought my authority as a researcher back in order to identify the passages that, as a result of the mapping, appeared as more illuminating to explore lad culture through affective lenses. In doing this, I put the trace back on the map (Deleuze and Guattari (1987[1980]). Deleuze and Guattari (1987[1980]) explain the idea of 'trace' as an emulation of analysis processes that are relatively safe inasmuch as are reliable and known, such as for example, categorising data. Even though Deleuze and Guattari considered mapping as distinct from coding, they saw it alongside an analysis spectrum and not in a binary relationship. In this way, Deleuze and Guattari argued tracing always intrudes the data analysis, thus to avoid this inevitable trespass, "*the tracing should always be put back on the map*" (1987[1980]: 3, emphasis not mine). With this, I do not render the methodology of coding as wrong or inferior to mapping, rather, as Mazzei (2014) argues, I work its limitations favouring more a 'plugging in' approach that

enables me to look at the data holistically, look for new and different connectives and produce knowledge differently (Lather 2007).

With regards to mapping affect across the transcripts, I consider the students' voices, their stories, as already affective, as already tangled in affective relations due to the nature of the topic discussed. Talking about lad culture with the participants involved a recounting of events that were tainted with aggression, harassment and, in some cases, assault. These topics are intrinsically affective as the participants were moved through their retelling. While it could be argued that affect would be more present during the event itself rather than its recounting, the participants' storied accounts were underpinned by affect, both visible in their voices and their choosing of words to describe their experiences. Their use of affective language to depict encounters with lad culture illustrates how affect leaked into discourse, what essentially allowed me to map it through the transcripts.

In the following section I introduce the structure of the analysis chapters. My approach to the participants' voices has also shaped the way I construct and present the analysis. In the analysis, I separated the groups (1, 3 and 5) into their own chapters, however, I also bring them back together for specific theory development chapters. I explore the structure of the analysis part of the thesis in what follows.

4.3.1 STRUCTURING THE ANALYSIS

The analysis is structured in five chapters. Three of these chapters are data analysis chapters that work on three specific cooperative inquiry groups and their voices: Chapter 5 is based on the transcripts with group 5, Chapter 7 works with the data from group 1, and Chapter 9 focuses on group 3. I focus on these groups' voices, since the knowledge produced by them felt intuitively the most productive (Coleman 2008). The reasons for arranging the analysis chapters by cooperative inquiry groups instead of themes are varied. First, grouping the chapters under a particular topic that was recurrent across all transcripts would reproduce coding and therefore, dichotomised narratives in the research. For example, having an analysis chapter on affect and another one on agency not only would present these two concepts as different from each other, but it would also construct them as localizable and thus, confined. Second, given the number of data groups that took part in the research, a thematic classification would have involved a constant comparison between the groups, hence interrupting the flow

of the mapping and consequent analysis. Below, I introduce the analysis chapters that follow in the thesis.

Chapter 5: '"*I can feel him staring*": Race, Laddish Mechanisms and Women's Reclamation of Spaces' explores the ways lad culture was understood by a group of women of colour undertaking the same postgraduate qualification. This chapter particularly looks at the workings of lad culture the women identified, which I refer to as 'laddish mechanisms'. These laddish mechanisms emerged as the conducts of power for lads, which I recognised as laddish laughter and laddish gaze. I explore this drawing on Foucault to research the ways gendered social hierarchies are reproduced through humour and gazing. In looking at the women's experiences with lad culture, I pay attention at how space shaped these interactions and the participants' navigation of traditionally laddish spaces (e.g. pubs). Lastly, I analyse the discourses the participants drew on to both resist lad culture and identify ways to stop its reproduction in campuses and in society.

Chapter 7: '"*I'm strong so I kicked him with my Doc. Martens*": Laddish Masquerade and Navigation of Sticky Laddish Nighttime Spaces' looks at the groups' interpretation of lad culture, particularly through the concepts of the 'laddish masquerade' and 'sticky atmospheres'. I develop the idea of the laddish masquerade drawing on Connell's 'hegemonic masculinity' and McRobbie's (2009) 'postfeminist masquerade'. I argue laddish masquerade emerges as a hyper-masculine template of identity for men, which works to maintain masculine hegemony in society. In this chapter, I also expand on the idea of 'sticky atmospheres' to explore the spatial dimensions of the reproduction of lad culture. In the end, I consider the strategies the participants discussed in order to tackle lad culture from University campuses.

Chapter 9: '"*It genuinely makes me fear for my life"*: Navigating and Negotiating Lad Culture as LGBTQIA+' explores the ways the group made sense of lad culture through discourses of class and sexuality. In looking at the participants' relation to lad culture, I explore the ways this shaped their subject position and self-understanding. For this, I used Muñoz's (1999) concept of 'disidentification', in conjunction with mis/recognition, to explore the ways the groups' identities were negotiated within the context of lad culture. Disidentification refers to a process where identities fail to be interpellated as a consequence of being positioned outside dominant ideologies of sex and race. I further explore these tensions looking at the idea of 'compulsory heterogenderism' (Nicolazzo 2017), which argues the unintelligibility diverse and

non-normative identities face in society. To finish, I consider the participants' discussions on moving beyond lad culture and identifying the ways to stop it.

The remaining two pieces are focused on developing particular theory through data. Even though I consider them as chapters, I view them as cutting in the analysis to offer a specific insight of theory development. The guiding light of these chapters is not a group's interpretation of lad culture, but the ways specific theoretical concepts can help me make sense of lad culture itself. These cutting in chapters are the result of plugging theory into the voices and voices into the theory. They emerge in-between groups and voices. They are not a result of coding, as they do not represent a specific theme that underpins transcripts, rather, they are voice-infused theoretical tools that inform the mapping, allowing me to further comprehend, pull apart and together the participants' voices. These chapters are the following:

Chapter 6: 'Cutting In: Sticky Atmospheres' develops the idea of 'sticky atmospheres' through Ahmed's concept of 'sticky affects' and Andersons' notion of 'affective atmosphere'. With this, I explore the spatial qualities of affect and provide an understanding of the socio-spatial workings of lad culture, which emerges as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered phenomenon. In this chapter, I look at how atmospheres can produce a stickiness that frames affective relations and the ways lad culture mobilises affect, which consequently shapes the space and the encounters that occur within.

Chapter 8: 'Cutting In: Laddish Mis/Recognition' develops an account of mis/recognition within the context of lad culture. Drawing on Benjamin's psychoanalytic theories and Fraser's Marxist-informed perspectives, I develop the idea of 'laddish mis/recognition'. With this, I look at how cultural, institutional and psychic mechanisms shape the participants' subjectivity construction. Misrecognition refers to being able to participate in society on a full member condition. In this regard, I argue the context of lad culture, underpinned by sexist, racist and homophobic behaviours, provides a framework of misrecognition for the participants in my study. I explore these tensions by paying attention to the moments where misrecognition emerges when one's identity is challenged and in conflict with itself.

Chapter 5: "*I Can Feel Him Staring*": Race, Laddish Mechanisms and Women's Reclamation of Spaces

In this chapter, I explore the discursive-affective understanding of lad culture produced by a group of female students of colour who were studying an MA. This group of students was recruited: first, due to their expressed interest in the project and in feminism; second, due to the overrepresentation of white students in research about lad culture in HE; and third, to explore whether lad culture affected postgraduate students similarly to undergraduates. Taking an intersectional approach to lad culture is one of the main goals of this research, as I aim to explore diverse experiences of laddism. In this light, involving participants from various ethnic and racial backgrounds in the study is crucial to produce a more comprehensive exploration of lad culture.

Throughout the meetings, the young women engaged in a discursive exploration of lad culture that drew on multiple personal experiences with it, ranging from their childhood years until the present. By positioning themselves as unknowing of lad culture, it quickly became evident the participants' knowledge was broader and deeper than they originally thought. They were surprised at this, as they believed lad culture was something distant to themselves, aware of its existence but not related to them.

In this chapter, I map the participants' accounts of lad culture as follows. First, the participants positioned themselves as unknowing subjects of lad culture. This positioning enabled them to make sense of lad culture critically, where they discursively created distance and a non-expert position that constructed them, nevertheless, as knowing of lad culture and its workings. It also enabled them to analyse what they believed to be the social origins of lad culture, which they located in youth and upbringing, and its racialized dimensions. Second, this distant inexpert location allowed them to dissect the workings of lad culture. I explore this through the affective notions of the 'gaze' and male laughter, as both were understood as mechanisms that put in place and supported lad culture's hierarchical power.

In the third part of this analysis, I show how the participants engaged in discussions where space was central. In their talk, space emerged as something to negotiate and carefully consider regarding one's position in it. Using a variety of strategies to avoid lad culture, the young women appeared to be in a constant negotiation of space. Sometimes, this led to a reclamation

of space, which positioned them as problematic subjects. Finally, I explore the participants' approaches to reducing the presence of lad culture amongst young men. This discussion varied from producing a rationalization of lad culture's origins as located in childhood to highlighting the role of education in stopping lad culture. From these conversations, the participants identified some pre-emptive strategies that could avert the reproduction of laddish attitudes.

I would like to note the affective underpinnings that shaped the conversations with the participants, and consequently, that frame this chapter. Discussing lad culture emerged as something affective itself, as it involved the recounting of personal experiences with lads. In this regard, affect was already present in the participants' talk, therefore making this research affective in itself. Following this, this chapter is marked by affect, particularly felt in the discussions on the gendered laddish mechanisms of power lads enact to maintain their hegemony. During these discussions, the participants recounted feeling frustrated, diminished and wanting to cry. In other parts of the conversation, affect emerged in the form of a felt gaze by the women, as a moving sensation that shaped spaces and interactions. As a result, affect appears in the chapter encircling the participants' discussions and stories.

5.1 UNDERSTANDING LAD CULTURE: COOLNESS AND SEGREGATION

This subsection traces the participants' broader understanding of lad culture as marked by 'coolness' and structured by race. In their conversation, race became central to the understanding of lad culture. The participants explored the racialized underpinnings of laddish culture and paid attention to the nexus of differences and similarities between different racialized lad groups. In making sense of the participants' interpretation of lad culture, I also pay close attention to race as shaping lad culture's construction and reproduction. Below, I first consider how the participants constructed the figure of the 'cool' lads; second, I explore the ways they located lad culture as originating during upbringing; and third, I contemplate the racial dimensions of lad culture as described by the young women, structured by both homogeneity and heterogeneity.

5.1.1 LADDISH COOLNESS

Situated as distanced from lad culture, the participants enjoyed a certain vision from the outside that allowed them to scrutinize lad behaviour and analytically examine its main characteristics.

When discussing the traits at the core of laddish behaviour, the participants repeated many of the characteristics noted across the project by other groups. However, in addition, they were also able to identify a specific attribute: laddish coolness. In an activity carried out as part of the data collection meeting, I asked the participants to write down words they associated with lad culture and then share them with the group.

Extract 1:

> Jess: So, I kinda did words-I ended up doing words that I associate with culture and my hair is getting really static. So like, I did it in like, two sections so I've got like, the lads, and then like, victims of-of-so, I've got like, 'cool, superior, fun and aspirational, macho, big, strong, fit, loud and boys'. And then I've got 'victimised, weak, defenceless, small, segregated, quiet, afraid, girls'.
>
> *(Meeting 1, 1st March 2018)*

In the extract, Jess dichotomised lad culture according to lads and their victims, for which she then attributed specific descriptive words. For the lads, Jess chose words that fit within the archetype of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995). Thus, she constructed a particular figure of a lad as embodying a "*macho*" masculinity, enjoying a higher status than the rest of men who might not be as "*strong*" or "*fun*" as them. Notably, the first adjective Jess wrote down was "*cool*"[19]. Jackson and Dempster (2009) explore the relation between cool and hegemonic masculinities within the context of education and academic achievement. In this work, Jackson and Dempster (2009) draw on Kimmel's take on hegemonic masculinity. Kimmel (2008) describes hegemonic masculinity as a construct that, shaped contextually and historically, exaggerates the traditional rules of masculinity. In his work, Kimmel (2008) refers to 'guyland' and 'guycode' to depict the reproduction of hegemonic types of masculinity among US men. Kimmel (2008; 2012) defines 'guycode' as a compilation of values and attitudes in the form of rules that compose what a man should be and how a man should behave. Jackson and Dempster (2009: 342) argue Kimmel's version of dominant US masculinity is analogous to laddism in Britain.

[19] It is relevant to point the origins of the word 'cool'. McGuigan (2009; 2012) explains 'cool' derives from the West African word "itutu" which refers to composure in battle. Associated with masculinity, it signified dignity within oppressive contexts. For example, under the circumstances of the slave trade. 'Cool' started to being used in white circles through the popularity of jazz culture in the USA.

Jackson and Dempster (2009) centre their discussion on the proliferation of 'cool masculinities' in secondary schools and HE. These 'cool masculinities' are shaped by the discourses of 'effortless achievement' and 'uncool to work', which construct masculinities within the context of education as based on a perception of academic work and effort as feminine, something that girls do, and therefore, 'uncool'. Jackson and Dempster (2009) link this with attaining an acceptable masculinity and not being rendered as a 'feminine other', as that would position them within the subordinate masculinities in the hegemonic hierarchy. Achieving good grades, therefore, needs to be presented as effortless, prioritizing socialising and partying over studying, but being successful in both. In this sense, laddish coolness appears to also involve performing an effortless laddish masculinity which conceals their efforts to be 'cool'. This works to give the illusion of authenticity to their performance, which would also work to consolidate their "*superior*", "*strong*" and "*macho*" identities.

In her talk, Jess also used the word "*aspirational*", therefore suggesting being a lad was something men aspired to. This contrasts with the discussion on the "*unsuccessful lads*" by the participants in the Gender Equality society (group 1), where the group deemed some men as unsuccessful lads, as they were seen as trying too hard (see Chapter 7 for a full discussion). It was this trying too hard that prevented them from being seen as lads, but rather, as 'men-trying-to-be-lads', and ultimately failing. Consequently, while for one group some men could not be lads because they tried too hard, for the other, some men tried to aspire to it regardless.

In Jess' extract, her choice of words for who she rendered the "*victims*" of lad culture was also significant. Her description, "*victimised, weak, defenceless, small, segregated, quiet, afraid, girls*", constructed an image of young women and girls experiencing lad culture as void of agency. They were depicted in a way that resonates with the victim discourse of weakness and defenceless, where girls are seen as vulnerable, helpless and in constant danger (Leisenring 2006). In addition, Jess depicted these girls as "*small*", referring to their physical appearance and complexion, which could be consequent of the words that follow it, "*quiet, afraid*". The use of "*small*" and the words that followed it could be interpreted through Orbach's (2009) reading of the petite female body as signifying submissiveness within patriarchal order where women are supposed to take up the minimum amount of space.

Discussions around laddish hostility and its impact on young girls and women were multiple, and at times, accompanied by an attempt to make sense of laddish behaviour itself. The

participants questioned its logic, its inherent misogyny and its aggression. But they also tried to ascertain where it came from, its roots, its socio-cultural origins. What makes a lad, a lad, and how can this process be identified? I explore this below.

5.1.2 YOUNG LADS AND INTENTIONALITY

The participants debated the origins of lad culture during the meetings as a way to rationalize it. In their discussions, they identified boys' upbringing as a determinant factor in their developing of a laddish identity, sometimes as a direct consequence, and sometimes as an indirect one (e.g. background). During a conversation, Tori explained what she believed was a decisive component in the process of becoming a lad, particularly at a young age.

Extract 2:

> Tori: And ehm, in terms of like, the culture-the like, lad culture, they're rude, they're bullies, they're idiots. Child-and I think childish and 'be a boy not a girl' are linked because I have four nephews and my uncle has two sons, and they're quite young, they're all under the age of like, seven. And like, so many times I've heard my uncle saying 'boys don't cry', 'you're not a boy, don't be a girl'. And so, I think that, being childish was associated with being like, a woman, or like, a feminine child in any sense. And being a boy was associated with being a lad.
>
> *(Meeting 1, 1st March 2018)*

Here, Tori identified gendered learning as shaping young boys' subjectivity and thus, determining their later lad identification. She distinguished phrases such as *"boys don't cry"* as crucial in establishing an identity hierarchy for boys. The expressing of an emotion through crying, McAllister, Callaghan and Fellin (2019) explain, is constructed as opposite to masculinity and what it involves (i.e. strength): it is seen as vulnerability and weakness. Gesualdi (2013) describes the act of crying as violating the social rules of hegemonic masculinities of public stoicism. In his work, Gesualdi (2013) focuses on the figure of the American politician John Boehner, who was known to cry often during public political events. Gesualdi (2013) notes that his crying acts were deeply scrutinized and mocked in the media. In this mockery, hegemonic masculine ideals were performed, and therefore, normative gendered behaviour was reasserted. Furthering research on men and emotions, Oransky and Marecek (2009) explore the lack of emotional intimacy young boys and male teenagers have within their social groups, which they argue is prompted in part by societal and peer expectations of masculine behaviour. The authors (2009) found young boys' constructions of

masculinity were carried out with femininity as its antithesis. For example, boys in their research presented the ability to be stoic and emotionally immune as necessary to be deemed 'manly', while they positioned 'soft' emotions (e.g. sadness, fear) as girly, gay and hence, inferior. In this way, the feminine is presented as other to the masculine (Paechter 2006), and as emasculating. Consequently, in Tori's talk, the masculine identity of a boy collapses with a laddish one, in that they are both urged to escape any association with femininity. For Tori, being a boy or being a lad are almost synonyms, as acting laddish might provide the opportunity of avoiding been deemed not 'manly enough' and therefore, feminine. This could suggest that boys are made into lads. Being a lad would not be, therefore, something intentional, but a consequence of boys' socialization.

From discussions linking laddish behaviour to gendered upbringing, the participants moved on to comment on more adult constructions of the 'lad'. In contrast to childhood socialisation, the adult lad was seen as intentional due to a lack of punishment. When asked about the reproduction of lad culture in HE spaces, Jess pinpointed it to a lack of accountability and retaliation, referring to two assault incidents shared in an earlier moment of the conversation that resulted in the attacker not being chased. One of the incidents was shared by Ash, who recounted being attacked by a white man and his wife during a Halloween celebration. Ash denounced the police response, as they reported the security cameras in the street were not working, resulting in both attackers leaving the scene unidentified. The other incident was shared by myself, involving an assault on my Asian partner by a group of white young men, which resulted in a broken nose. I recounted the police response being extremely unhelpful, and the cameras in the street were also reported as not working. Both incidents had a racist component, as in the two cases the attackers were white and the attacked were people of colour. And in both incidents, there were no consequences for the aggressors[20]. In this apparent lack of accountability, the participants linked these incidents to the intentions of the lads.

Extract 3:

Jess: I think is when you're younger you don't really tell anybody. But when you're a bit older you realise, 'no, this is actually wrong'. And then you start reporting it and stuff. But like we just said, I think-now thinking about it, the lads get, not influenced, but more motivated because they

[20] I have decided not to include the extract in which the participants and I discuss these incidents as the conversation was highly disjointed across different pages of the transcripts.

don't think nothing is gonna happen to them. Because the cameras don't end up working or the police don't want to really get involved.

Tori: Yeah.

Ash: I agree.

Jess: So, they're more motivated to just do it cos they know nothing is gonna happen. There'll be no consequences.

Tori: Yeah. Like, they got a free pass cos nothing is gonna happen to them, might as well do it.

(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)

In this extract, Jess drew on developmental discourse on morality to explain the higher reporting on "*wrong*" laddish behaviours among older people and low reporting among younger people. In her talk, Jess also established a connection between lad culture and intentionality. For her, lads are motivated by the prospects of not being punished. It was this lack of consequences that, for Jess, provided the grounds for the reproduction of lad culture: the lack of retaliation motivates laddish behaviours. Following this, Tori also pointed to the intentionality behind lad culture ("*they got a free pass cos nothing is gonna happen to them, might as well do it*."). In highlighting the lack of help provided by the police, and consequently the absence of any repercussion to the lads that act inappropriately or even aggressively, both Jess and Tori were pointing to a structural and broader system that protects racist and misogynistic attackers. In this regard, intentionality appears as something boys acquire as they grow up, through the realisation of not facing consequences for their actions, regardless of how violent and/or racist. As I explore in the next section, by opening up accounts of violence, the participants were able to further explore the racial structuring of lad culture.

5.1.3 NON-WHITE LADS: UNIVERSALITY, SEGREGATION AND HIERARCHISED HOMOGENEITY

Previous literature in the field has often linked whiteness with lad culture, describing those who participate in it as white men (Haslop, n.d; Phipps 2017a; Reeds 2018). Nevertheless, the participants challenged this assumption during the group meetings by shedding light on what they saw as the universal underpinnings of lad culture in relation to race. When asked if they thought lad culture could be applied to men of colour, the participants emphasised the prevalence of laddish behaviours as not race-specific.

Extract 4:

Tori: I think it can be applied to other races but I think is-it's just not as much because it wasn't seen as much maybe? Like, the pictures you'd see

you'd always see in a stereotypical young white man. it wouldn't be a young man, there's always that racial context to it. But yeah, I think it can be applied to different ones, it doesn't necessarily have to be just the white man.

Silvia: So, it's a universal term.

Tori: Yes, to an extent, yeah. I would argue it is.

Jess: Because I reckon if you went to a different country and you would try to do the same research I bet you'd probably find the same stuff, like, the same findings but with a different race.

(Meeting 1, 1st March 2018)

Above, both Jess and Tori stressed the universality of the concept of lad culture and its broader applicability to different racial/national contexts. However, Tori noted the invisibility of lads of colour by pointing to common images representing lad culture as "*always*" portraying stereotypical white men. In Tori's talk, the immediate link to whiteness in representations of lad culture worked to conceal other laddish identities enacted by men of colour. In this extract, lad culture emerged as a concept that transcended race, national and cultural backgrounds. For example, Jess indicated the potentiality of getting the same research findings if the research was to be carried out in a different country with a different racial population. Here, Jess seemed to be conflating nationality with race, inferring Britishness means whiteness, and therefore not acknowledging that there are different races within the same country, despite herself being of colour and British. To return to the construct of a universal lad culture, the apparent universality of the term extrapolates it from the context where it first emerged, meaning, the white British male working classes (Phipps and Young 2015a). This extrapolation of the concept calls into question the term itself. If lad culture as a concept loses its attachment to the specific environment where it emerged, can we still talk about lad culture? How to determine what constitutes lad culture in a global context? How helpful is it to have the concept of lad culture as an all-encompassing term for misogynistic behaviour and toxic masculinity? (See Chapters 7 and 8 for a discussion on lad culture and toxic masculinity).

Cosslett (2014) argues current definitions of lad culture have turned it into an umbrella term that includes from sexist banter, to rape and sexual assault. For Cosslett (2014), this all-encompassing interpretation of lad culture potentially trivialises sexually violent behaviours, concealing them under a nickname that moves them away from its true name: misogyny. The linking of lad culture to rape or other sexually predatory attitudes, argues Cosslett (2014), ghettoise these behaviours, and circumscribe them within a very specific group of people, therefore secluding it from broader structures of misogyny in society.

Within the context of this extract, the potential universality of lad culture and its applicability to a wide range of dissimilar contexts works also to conceal culturally specific misogynistic behaviours. I would argue, making lad culture a global term under which different misogynistic attitudes are framed, not only trivialises sexual violence, but it also nullifies the meaning of lad culture as a concept. How to define what lad culture is when every misogynistic behaviour is considered to be an articulation of it? Where can the line be drawn? In the extract, both Jess and Tori agreed to use lad culture as a descriptor for worldwide misogyny without making explicit reference to misogyny itself. In doing this, they evidence Cosslett's argument on the widespread use of the term as an umbrella concept covering all forms of misogyny, with the addition of also covering different socio-cultural contexts. As a result, lad culture emerges as omnipotent and unrestricted in use by geographical location.

The discussions around the universality of lad culture led to further discussions of its racial underpinnings. Considering lad culture as no longer exclusive to white men opens up the possibility to the participants to review and evaluate how race played a determinant factor in its reproduction. When arguing whether the participants believed lad culture engaged in racist behaviours, Tori and Jess explained the racial dynamics structuring laddish groups.

Extract 5:

Jess: You know, thinking about it, I think there could be, maybe like, you got like, the whole, it could be like, a group of like, white lads, and then you'd-I don't think it'd be too mixed-

Tori: Yeah, I think, yeah-

Jess: I think there could be a group of like, white lads, a group of like, black lads, a group of Asian lads.

Tori: It wouldn't be like, a mixed group of lads, it would be racially segregated groups of lads.

Jess: Like, when I was at school there was like, always like, the group of Asian lads, which was called like, the A squad, and then there was like […] then there was a group of like, white lads, then there was a few like, there wasn't many black people in my school, there was like a little group of like, black guys. Yeah, but they'd-they would talk and stuff and kind of mix at times but you could-you knew which ones were like, the groups.

(Meeting 1, 1st March 2018)

In this passage, Jess and Tori highlighted the racial segregation of laddish cultures within the context of secondary schools. This racial-based division among lad groups recounted by the participants reflects a broader problem of ethnic and racial segregation present in British

schools (Burgess, Wilson and Lupton 2005; Weale 2017; Asthana and Parveen 2016; The Challenge 2017). According The Challenge study (2017) on school segregation in Britain, more than a quarter of public primary schools in England (26%) are internally ethnically segregated. Regarding secondary schools, the figures are four in 10 (40.6%). These high levels of segregation at schools also reflect a further division present in the playgrounds (Burgess, Wilson and Lupton 2004; Wilson 2013). Burgess, Wilson and Lupton (2004) found that the levels of segregation were consistently higher at schools than in neighbourhoods. Children and teenagers were found to be separated into white or non-white-majority schools primarily, and further segregated within their own playground. In the extract, Jess argued this racial segregation was sometimes interrupted in moments of mixing '*they would talk and stuff and kind of mix at times*". However, this was not long-lasting and did not result in a significant reconciliation between the groups, as Jess claimed, "*you knew which ones were like, the groups*", therefore suggesting an enduring separation between them.

Despite the sharp segregation among the different racialized lad groups, the participants noted a consistent similarity underpinning them. The groups of lads, though segregated by race, were rendered as fairly homogeneous. When asked if they considered the groups to be distinct from each other in values or opinions, the young women pointed to their similarities.

Extract 6:

Jess:	I can't see what would be different about them.
Tori:	I feel they're all-
Jess:	Very similar
Tori:	So similar. And the differences would be the colour of their skin which sounds so ridiculous. But, that's probably what differentiated them.

(Meeting 1, 1st March 2018)

Both Jess and Tori agreed on the apparent homogeneity shaping racially segregated lad culture groups. This similarity shared among the different men could be reflective of the patriarchal alliance that hooks (1981: 90) claims exists between white men and men of colour on the basis of their shared sexism. hooks (1981) explains that within the context of the civil rights movement in the USA, black men allied themselves with white patriarchs to maintain patriarchal domination over women. This resulted in the establishing of a black male patriarchy that oppressed black women and relegated them to a subservient position (hooks 1981: 5). Like Connell's (1995) hegemonic masculinity, masculinity is stratified by class and race, where white middle- and upper-class men are positioned on top, and the rest at the bottom due to their

subordinate masculinities. Despite this degradation, Wesley (2015) argues black men still construct identities conforming to hegemonic notions of masculinity, therefore also exercising sexist oppression of black women. This suggests a hierarchy underpinning lad culture based, primarily, on gender, and secondly, on race.

It could be argued that Tori's categorising of the segregation among the lads as "*so ridiculous*" works also to distance herself from engaging in segregation practices. In this sense, segregation is presented as other people's problem – in this case, the lads' – and as external to Tori. When asked about the inner-workings of the lads of colour, the participants identified a specific characteristic.

Extract 7:

Jess:	Maybe they'd aspire to be like the white lads.
Tori:	Maybe.
Jess:	Cos like, I'm tryna think about it now and I remember like, a few of them from like, A Squad would try to go to like, being in the white squad.

(Meeting 1, 1st March 2018)

In Jess' talk, the white lads were positioned as both the norm and the desirable ideal for lads of colour, with the Asian lads aspiring to be *"be like the white lads"* and be in their "*squad*". In aspiring to being "*like*" or in their group, the hierarchized homogeneity is highlighted, as different groups of lads (e.g. white, Asian) enjoy different levels of privilege and status within the culture itself. This lad hierarchy is heavily racialized, with the white lads described as being at the top, hence symbolising something to aspire to, and the rest, in this case Asian men, in positions below.

In his work, Park (2015) unpacks the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and race in relation to Asian American males. Park (2015) argues the link between masculinity and race has been shaped by cultural understandings of who and what constitutes 'masculine', which he argues has been traditionally and exclusively linked to notions of 'whiteness' and 'heterosexuality'. Park (2015) particularly explores the Asian American masculinity, which he describes as having been constructed following subordinate masculinity stereotypes underpinned by racist and colonial connotations. According to this work, the Asian American male Park describes is therefore 'shy', 'nerd' and 'passive'. As a consequence, Parker (2015: 371) argues, the Asian American man represents the "abandonment of 'authentic [and

hegemonic] masculinity'", which is considered to be appropriately embodied by the white American man. Park's (2015) explanation of the racialized hegemonic masculinity is reflected in the extract as the group of Asian males, called "*A squad*", were positioned at a lower rank of the masculine hierarchy, with the participants only citing race as the main reason for this.

Through these extracts, the participants described lad culture through its applicability to non-British and ethnically and racially diverse contexts. Despite this, the group's recounting of their personal experiences with lad culture tended to be located in a British context. Simultaneously, lad culture emerged as heavily split and racially hierarchized. Consequently, lad culture as a discourse of masculinity stood in tension between universality and fracture. Alongside these conversations about the cultural and racial structure of gendered power, the women in the group also discussed their personal experiences with lad culture and shared stories of resistance and negotiation, which is the focus of the next section.

5.2 STRATEGIES AND TACTICS IN 'LADDISH' SPACES

In the participants' talk, lad culture appeared as liquid, for example in the analysis above where it was not determined by a specific geographical location. However, concurrently, the participants tailored their interactions with lad culture to specific locations and situations, therefore suggesting a certain relationship between the lads and precise events and spaces. As the theme of space occurred across the groups, I deepen in this issue through the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' in the next chapter. The themes of this concept are, however, introduced briefly here.

My understanding of space draws heavily on the work of feminist geographers and urban development theorists. I conceptualise space as a constructed force field (Amin 2014) where discourses, affects, agencies, bodies and objects interact, shaping the exchange accordingly. As explained in the methodology chapter, I understand agency as an intersubjective agent that is distributed among bodies and objects, opening up potentialities for negotiations and resistance. This understanding of agency allows me to map agentic capacities (Coole 2005) in the in-between-ness of an exchange or as framed by spatial dimensions. In the following, I turn to the participants' voices in order to explore space and agency in their accounts of lad culture.

5.2.1 OCCUPPIED SPACE AND MOVING

The women often described the lads they encountered as taking over a particular space – the street, the club, the bar, or even secondary and primary school settings. Consequently, the group discussions often centred on conversations about space. Soon, it became clear that the lads in these stories were seen as occupying spaces traditionally associated with men and masculinity, such as pubs and bars (Hall 2017; Tomsen 1997). In this regard, it could be argued the women's presence in these locations was seen as disruptive to established gendered spaces (Sheard 2011). The women in the group described themselves as challenging this occupation by the lads, negotiating and resisting laddish spaces.

The participants' discussion of laddish occupation of space included instances of aggression and assault, and events where the mere presence of lads shifted the dynamics of the space. The participants shared strategies they developed and enacted to avoid interaction with the lads and to keep away from the space they were occupying. Situated within library settings, Tori, explained her thought process and space navigation when encountering lads at the library café.

Extract 8:

Tori:	I've done that in eh, the library, not here, but in [location], we have a little Starbucks, and there's like, always somehow manages to be a couple of lads just hanging around where the sugar and stuff is. And I can't have tea without sugar so I would send my friend and he would grab my sugar and then I'd go around and then we'd make my tea properly. Because sometimes you just don't wanna deal with it. Other times I don't mind, but I think it's always from what you can hear them talking about-
Jess:	-yeah-
Tori:	-or the way they talk. And it-
Jess:	-or the way they're standing-
Tori:	-yeah! And how, the minute you're close like, if you walk up to someone, if you're in their way, you'd nat-not even na-I think it's normal to move slightly so you're not in their way. But if they don't move, you kinda walk away, like, that's confrontation you don't want with a group of lads really.

(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)

Above, Tori illustrated not only monitoring her behaviour, but also monitoring her physical movement within the café of her home library. Her corporeality was determined by the lads' own bodily presence. For the simple task of making her tea, Tori engaged in different moving strategies: asking her friend to move and grab the sugar for her, and her own going "*around*" afterwards to make her tea "*properly*". In Tori's talk, the lads' bodies appear as impeding Tori's

body from moving within the same space. However, her male friend appeared as able to move in that space unaffected. In this way, Tori's story highlights the gendered ways in which space is structured and navigated differently by men and women. This underlines what Doan (2010: 635) refers to as the "tyranny of gender", meaning the ways the gender binary is spatialized. The spatialization of the gender binary works to constrain certain behaviours not deemed acceptable in particular spaces (i.e. femininity within a perceived masculine space), therefore oppressing this behaviour and integrally shaping people's experiences and movements in specific gendered spaces (Doan 2010).

Doan (2010) explores her own experiences of the tyranny of gender as a trans woman, exploring the gendered spatial interactions within public and private spaces. Doan (2010) argues different gender performativity in particular spatial contexts can lead to different outcomes, ranging from sexual objectification to assault. Doan (2010) explains not all gendered spaces are as perversely dichotomised, as some offer the potential for confrontation and transformation (648). For example, Doan (2010) explains that while there are some situations where she chooses to perform her gender identity in accordance to the gender dichotomy, there are others moments where her gender performance may expand this binary, therefore shaping her visibility in particular spaces. Even though Doan's experiences as a trans woman cannot be equated with Tori's, who identifies as cis, Doan's work provides crucial insight into how the gendering of space shapes one's behaviour and performance.

In extract 8, Tori and Jess pointed to specific behaviours that result in a gendering of space and a consequent restructuring and hierarchizing of its dynamics. This included how the lads talked, what they talked about, and the specific way they stood, all of which the participants considered to read the space and, consequently, to monitor their behaviour. For example, Tori anticipated a potentially hostile encounter with the lads shaped both by the space framing the event and by the bodies' location within that space. Tori highlighted the "*normal*" behaviour of moving not to stand in someone's way. However, she pointed to how the tables turn when lads are in someone's way, therefore suggesting the inapplicability of this "*normal*" behaviour to lads. In this regard, Tori explained her strategy in navigating the situation if the lads decided not to move out of her way, which consisted of walking away ("*But if they don't move, you kinda walk away*"). The decision to walk away was, for Tori, prompted by the desire to avoid confrontation – "*that's confrontation you don't want with a group of lads really*". In this last sentence, a certain warning was visible, suggesting a probable escalation of the encounter. As

a consequence, moving or walking away was presented as the only non-confrontational alternative to the event. In this way, laddish occupation of the space remained unchallenged, thus reinforcing the spatial gendered hierarchy that makes women engage in moving practices to maintain their safety.

With this, I am not making the women responsible for not challenging lad occupation of space. Rather, I am illustrating how the gendering of space, described by the participants, worked to create certain dynamics in which a hierarchy of 'being' within that space was established. Additionally, I would like to highlight the agentic capacities of this story. For this, as explained in the methodology chapter, I employ an understanding of agency as distributed and outside the dichotomy of agentic/non-agentic. This story's narrative involved women's need to move as a consequence of lads' occupation of space. Tori engaged in decision-making, emphasising her own safety within the space and wishing to avoid direct confrontation. While this would not be rendered as agentic under an understanding of agency as a synonym for resistance to social norms (Mahmood 2005), I view it as involving agentic capacities inasmuch as Tori recounted navigating the space bearing in mind her own security.

5.2.2 RECLAIMING SPACE

Despite the number of accounts that centred on the laddish occupation of space as something navigated through moving strategies, the women in the group also discussed instances where the space was negotiated and disrupted. In doing this, the women engaged in reclaiming their rights to occupy traditionally male spaces. When talking about the reasons why some participants decided to move rather than to confront the lads, Ash, reflected on why she believed her behaviour would differ from the others', which she put down to having a *"thick skin"*. She stated:

Extract 9:

> Ash: No, I-I actually understand what you mean, but I feel like for me it's been, because I've-I have that thick skin and I just I- don't care, and I just go and grab what I need to grab and leave. I think that kinda comes out of me. Like, I have that aura around me so it's-I've never been in a situation where they would pick on me. And I come from a country where I grew up with predominately white people, and I've heard the whispers. I have, but no one ever said it to my face.
>
> *(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)*

Above, Ash recounted her reasons for acting differently from the other women in the group. Earlier in the conversation, Ash had explained what brought her to develop her "*thick skin*", suggesting "*because I've been with lads, guys, boys, for a very long time, I kinda built up this thick skin*". However, while it could be understood that this 'thick skin' is what enabled Ash to move freely in spaces that might be occupied by lads, she also pinpointed its origins as a consequence of having had to deal with negative experiences that required her to build resistance to racist behaviours in predominately white environments. Notably, she also framed her thick skin as something natural to her, saying "*I think that kinda comes out of me*". As a black woman in Sweden, she described growing up "*with predominately white people*" and cited hearing what she referred to in this extract as the "*whispers*". When asked about these whispers, Ash elaborated: "*well, you know, you walk through the halls and… you hear some negative words about your race and skin colour*".

Alongside a thick skin, Ash also described herself as having a specific "*aura*", which she said prevented her from harassment. The thick skin and the aura work in conjunction, protecting Ash from harassment and allowing her to reclaim her presence in hostile spaces. However, despite the positive outcomes her thick skin and aura might bring in constructing her as tough, they are both entangled with stories of discrimination, misogyny and racism (Chen et al. 2018; Probyn 2004). In this extract, Ash established a direct relationship between racism and the whispers, using this word to signify racial abuse. Ash later discussed the impact of the whispers in her life:

Extract 10:

> Ash: But like I said, it just made me thicker […] the whispers, but like, for me, it helped me growing up because I was one of the few black people in my entire school. […] Growing up, yeah. It-it helped me, uhm, and it just-I just, yeah. I don't-I don't ignore it, I-I don't-it doesn't frighten me or anything I just, I do what I need to do and I leave. That's it. And if you have something to say, say it to my face, and if you don't, I'm gonna walk off.
>
> *(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)*

In this extract, Ash described the whispers as a determining factor in becoming resilient to racial abuse. In this regard, the presence of whispers in Ash's life was presented as what made her stronger and what enabled her navigation of certain spaces assertively. This could be linked to the stereotype of the 'strong black woman'. In their work on black and white North-

American women's perception of womanhood, Settles, Pratt-Hyatt and Buchanan (2008) argue strength was constructed as central to black womanhood, and even as a necessity to navigate living in racist societies.

In Ash's talk, growing up hearing the whispers in a predominantly white Swedish school was constructed as strengthening her identity. Even though Ash did not describe herself using the word 'strong', it is possible to see the similarities in this extract between the 'strong black woman' discourse and her self-presentation. Ash constructed herself as unafraid ("*it doesn't frighten me or anything*"), assertive ("*I do what I need to do and I leave*") and bold ("*And if you have something to say, say it to my face, and if you don't, I'm gonna walk off*), which allowed her to articulate her own 'strong black woman' identity, enabling her to move within potentially problematic spaces assertively (Watson and Hunter 2016). Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2007) describes the trope of the 'strong black woman' as a problematic discourse that normalizes and silences racist and sexist discrimination, and internalizes black women's responsibility to handle and cope with abuse. In this regard, and within the context of this extract, the 'strong back woman' identity emerged as a strategy to inhabit some spaces and negotiate certain situations.

Despite the problems performing a 'strong black woman' identity might entail for black women, it can also lead to moments of assertiveness where the gendered and racialized status quo is challenged; moments of reclaiming space. When discussing the gendered spatial dynamics of a local pub, some participants expressed engaging in a careful consideration of the space before deciding where to sit. The pool table was described as a laddish space, therefore being a place to avoid, even if they felt like playing. However, Ash differed in her approach to the situation.

Extract 11:

Ash:	I actually go up to the pool table and ask them 'are you done playing? No?' and I would just stand there like -
Jess:	- 'Hurry up!'
Tori:	- 'You done now?'
Ash:	'Really? No? Well I have another five minutes until I'm taking that pool table'. Like, literally, like, I did that last time when I was in Lok, and I just stood there waiting for them.
Silvia:	How did they react?
Ash:	They were so nervous. It was the worst thing ever. They absolutely hated me I could tell. And I was just like 'hm'. And the guy was just like,

> ‘seriously? Could you just let us play our thing?’. And I was like ‘no, you’ve been here for like, thirty minutes, I’ve had enough, I wanna play’. And I waited it out and they actually had enough of me standing there and they-they left. They had like a million coins and they were ready to just not move, and I was just like, ‘well, I have one coin, let me play!’ So, I waited it out. And they got nervous and left. […] I don’t even know how to play pool, don’t get it twisted.
>
> *(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)*

Here, Ash recounted a situation that involved reclaiming space from the lads, with her account interrupted by Tori and Jess. These participants’ interjections in the extract suggest a prior knowledge of the situation and its unfolding, which they carried out through the echoing of Ash’s reaction to the event, as if they knew what Ash was going to say and how. It could be argued both Tori and Jess’ participation in the conversation is led by their picturing of Ash through the stereotype of the ‘sassy’ or ‘angry’ black woman (Winfrey Harris 2014). After these interruptions, Ash proceeded to tell the story, where challenging lads’ power became central. The challenging of power Ash exercised in this event was predominately physical, as she depicted the situation with herself standing next to the table. Ash depicted this challenge as having an effect on the men, who she portrayed as “*nervous*”. Ash described calling into question the lads’ occupation first, by approaching the pool table, and second, by reclaiming the space through addressing the lads directly, expressing her determination to play. In the end, Ash confessed to not knowing how to play pool. However, Ash presented this as irrelevant, as it was her desire to occupy that space herself that motivated her actions. Her success in the story resulted in a disruption of the gendered dynamics structuring the pub’s sociality.

Not all the stories resulted in a successful reclamation and re-appropriation of space such as the one above. The participants’ navigation in certain spaces and their negotiation of laddish occupation was sometimes met with resistance on the part of the lads. In discussing their experiences with lad culture when resisting their hegemony, the participants’ talk highlighted the mechanisms lad culture articulates in order to re-secure their dominant position. I explore the laddish articulations of power in the analysis below.

5.3 LADDISH MECHANISMS: STARING AND LAUGHING

In the participants’ retelling of personal stories with lad culture, they were able to discern how lads consolidated power over women. Two recurrent laddish mechanisms emerged from the participants’ discussions: laddish gaze and laddish laughter. These mechanisms appeared as

shaping their interactions through the circulation of affect. Through gazing and laughing, the lads seemed to frame situations, spaces and encounters as a means to re-establish dominance and superiority. First, I explore the ways in which the laddish gaze was described by the participants as something to further navigate. Second, I map how laughter acted as a conduit of masculine power that often lead to sexist and misogynistic interactions.

The participants shared many stories that centred on specific types of looking. Within this context, the young women depicted the act of looking as determining the encounters with the lads, both before and after any verbal interaction occurred. In this regard, lads described as engaging in looking practices appeared to subject both people and entire situations through their gaze. I use the term 'gaze' in this chapter in a Foucauldian sense. Foucault (1963[2003]; 1975[1991]) employed the word 'gaze' to explain the manifestation and spreading of power, resulting in the creation and reproduction of hierarchized power relations. I explore this gaze paying attention to its affective dimensions: a gaze that becomes internalised by affective means. Tori shared a story in which looking, or as she described it "*staring*", shaped and established a power relation.

Extract 12:

Tori: When I was in Paris in December, I think I told this las time, eh, we were in a club it was… four of us in total? Yeah, four of us. So, me, my friend and then two of our guy friends were with us. And we were dancing away, having a laugh, pissing about, we didn't know the song but we were still having a good time. And then, someone behind my friend, someone-my friend accidentally fell back onto someone, but it looked like he tripped. I can't actually remember. But it wasn't on purpose, it was an acid-accident. So, this guy turned around and was staring at the back of his head. And I can see him-I'm trying to make eye contact with him and then my friend-I'm trying to get my friend to move but this guy would not leave. Like, he would stand right next to us. And then I moved, I put myself in between thinking 'I'm the woman, he's not gonna do anything to me'. Just staring right at the back of my head and I was like, I could feel him staring. And then we had to literary leave […]

(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)

In this extract, Tori recounted a situation where her and her friends felt intimidated into leaving a club. She described the event as an accident that evolved into intimidation on the part of a man who Tori depicted as "*staring*" at her and her friends. In Tori's talk, it was this staring that changed both the physical arrangement of her friendship group in the club and the social

dynamics of the event. As Tori recounted the story, she suggested no verbal exchange or physical interaction occurred between her group of friends and the man, excepting one of her friend's accidental tripping. The entirety of the encounter is reduced to the stare that was perceived as threatening and was firstly directed to the friend who tripped. In order to negotiate this stare, Tori described failing to get the man's attention, and consequently, engaging in moving strategies that would position herself between the two men. In doing this, Tori seemed to see her female gender as providing security ("*I'm the woman, he's not gonna do anything to me*"). For Tori, it is her female body in the situation that granted safety. This rationale is at odds with Sheard's (2011) work exploring women's fear of potential male aggression during the nighttime economy. Rather, it could be argued, Tori's logic fits in with the social discourse around violence against women that promotes the idea that "(real) men don't hit women" (Salter 2016: 463). However, Tori's interference in the situation did not alleviate the charged atmosphere; it made the man redirect his stare to her. Tori described this stare rather affectively, not as something she saw personally, but as something she could feel ("*I could feel him staring*"). This underlines the mobilisation of affect that laddish mechanisms generate. After this last stare, Tori recounted having to leave to avoid an escalation to physical confrontation.

In this story, the staring carried out by the man can be explained as a 'gaze'. Larsen and Urry (2011: 1110) describe the gaze, or more accurately, the act of gazing, as "the 'discursive determinations' of socially constructed seeing or 'scopic regimes'". A 'scopic regime' does not refer to an actual stare, but to the social discourses and practices that shape what we (are allowed to) see or not and how we see it (Larsen and Urry 2011). In this regard, vision is a gaze that is socially and discursively constructed, and consequently involved in reproducing power relations of looking (Larsen and Urry 2011: 1111). Tori's depiction of the man's stare, drawing on Foucault (1963[2003]; 1975[1995]), turns it into a gaze as it became the medium of power through which social hierarchies were generated. This gaze emerged as fluid, as Tori recognised how the gaze moved, which made her put herself between the men in order to shift the gaze from him on to her. Within the context of this extract, this stare did not straightforwardly create power relations in a one-way fashion. Foucault's explanation on the workings of the gaze does not reduce it to an external force with incommensurate power. Rather, Foucault focuses on the process of interiorization of the gaze as the crucial factor in establishing hierarchized power relations (Krips 2010: 96). In the extract, Tori said she could feel the stare, which suggested an internal penetration of the stare, its interiorization, her becoming aware of it, and being consequently felt at the subjective level. It was this

internalization of the man's stare which turned it into the disciplinary apparatus of the gaze, shaping the encounter, socially, physically and affectively.

A second laddish mechanism of masculine power and hierarchical control the participants had to navigate was laughter. The participants shared many of stories involving encounters with the lads that concluded in laughter. The women in the group described laddish laughter as allowing the reproduction of their problematic behaviours, erasing the seriousness of their actions, and ridiculing the women's resistance to them. It was also described as deeply affective, which is reflected in Ash's reflection on her own experiences facing laddish laughter.

Extract 13:

Ash: But, something happened to me a lot of times when-when I've got into these-these arguments and guys would laugh at me-guys would laugh at me instead and they would say things to me, things like, what-what would they say? But they would be like, 'ah, you are brave. You brave-you brave'. And I'm just like 'why are you saying that?' and they're like, 'well, look at your situation, you're the one standing here fight-arguing with ten guys like, you're brave', and then they would just laugh at me. That makes me feel some type of way, diminished.

[Later in the conversation]

They're mocking me […] and I can't do anything about it. Oh, it's frustrating. I'll cry. Not in front of you, but I will cry.

(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)

Above Ash explained the problems of engaging in a serious argument with lads because of the laddish laughter and the mockery that followed. Ash presented this as reoccurring, therefore pointing to a behavioural pattern that lads enact when being confronted. In relation to this, Barnes (2012) explains men employ humour in a defensive way as a strategy to gain status and reassert their masculinity. This defensiveness emerges as a reaction to secure their traditional hegemonic masculine identities (Barnes 2012).

In the extract, Ash recounted being called "*brave*" by the lads due to her continued arguing with "*ten guys*"'. The use of the word 'brave' in this particular context suggests a rather patronising underpinning. With parallels to the construct of the 'strong black woman' discussed earlier, Slaughter (2016) labels the use of the word 'brave' to describe women as an insulting microaggression. Slaughter (2016) argues women are called brave for doing things that should not be considered brave, such as standing up for oneself or not hiding one's cellulite. In this extract, the account of Ash as being called brave not only works to ignore Ash's arguments in

the dispute, but also to dismiss and ridicule her, something she recognised. The condescending use of 'brave' in the passage is further highlighted by the laughter and mockery that reportedly followed it. This particular exchange has affective consequences. In Ash's talk, she appeared to be affectively moved by this interaction as she described it making her feel diminished, frustrated, and wanting to cry. The lads' laughter did not only subjectively affect Ash, it also generated a power dynamic where she was discursively and affectively subjected to their condescending teasing, and, as a result, repositioned in a subordinate position to the lads. It could be argued that in this encounter, humour was used to re-consolidate the lads' superiority and hegemonic power after having it called into question.

The participants also engaged in a rationalization of laddish laughter: they attempted to make sense of it, analyse it and find the main motives that brought lads to laugh in what they perceived to be serious situations. When asked whether they thought laughing at someone was the worst that could be done while arguing, the participants shared different points of view.

Extract 14:

Silvia:	Do you think the best slash worst thing you can do is laugh at them?
Jess:	Well, or just start mocking them.
Tori:	Yeah
Jess:	Or just make comments like 'oh, did you really just say that?'. And you're just there like, 'shut up'.
Tori:	Yeah
Silvia:	Yeah, turn everything into a joke-
Tori:	-because you're being quite serious in that moment and-
Ash:	-exactly!-
Jess:	-they can't take it, when they realise that is serious and they can't take that-
Ash:	-no, I feel like they're just mocking you!-
Tori:	It depends-
Jess:	-it depends yeah.
Ash:	Yeah! It is, cos they just mock you cos they know that-
Tori:	-they've lost the fight, but we can keep going if you just keep pushing them down-
Ash:	-and then you, exactly

(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)

In the extract above, the participants identified laughter as a mechanism for challenging lads. At the beginning of the extract, I asked the participants if they believed laughing at lads was a good strategy when dealing with them. Jess' response to my question could be interpreted in two ways. First, in saying "*oh, did you really just say that?*", she was articulating a response

to the lads in a mocking fashion, therefore enacting her agentic capacities, which were also evidenced in her later comment, also directed to the lads: "*shut up*". However, in saying "*oh, did you really just say that?*" Jess could also be identifying a specific sentence that lads use as part of their teasing, therefore evidencing a prior knowledge of laddish mockery, possibly provided by her personal experiences with them. After this, the women and myself analysed what could move the lads to laugh, while I highlighted laddish sexist banter as what could potentially be grounding the laughter. I would also like to point to my own interaction in the extract, where I internalise the participants' narrative, saying "*turn everything into a joke*". Meanwhile, Jess pointed to lads' inability to take the gravity of the circumstances, inasmuch as doing so might involve a reconsideration of their behaviours and ultimately, identities. However, Ash positioned herself against Jess' opinion, suggesting lads do not engage in laughter because they cannot accept the seriousness of the situation, rather, they laugh because they can ("*I feel like they're just mocking you!*"). Building on Ash's comments, Tori portrayed laddish laughter as a last resort when lads have "*lost the fight*", which enabled them to negotiate their losing position in the argument by engaging in a practice (laughter) that allowed them to trivialise and humiliate women's grievance ("*we can keep going if you just keep pushing them down*").

From these extracts, and drawing on Barnes (2012), laughing emerges as a performative strategy for lads to construct masculine identity and resist the challenges that might be posed against their hegemonic power. Kehily and Nayak (1997: 84) explain male rituals of humour "involve the embodiment of heterosexuality where disciplinary techniques operate as an 'anatomy of power' (Foucault 1975[1991])". Laughter appears to substantiate heterosexual masculinity and reassert sexist gendered hierarchies (Kehily and Nayak 1997). Consequently, laughter becomes a laddish mechanism to reify lads' power and identity socially.

The above discussion has shown how the participants made sense of the laddish occupation of space, navigating laddish spaces, reclaiming space, enduring the laddish gaze and confronting laddish laughter. Throughout these talks, the participants developed various strategies to cope and sometimes challenge lad culture. From these accounts, the young women described what could be done to decrease the presence of lad culture not only in University campuses, but also among primary and secondary schools. I turn to this below.

5.4 STOPPING LAD CULTURE

Following a pattern applied to all the groups, the last discussions with the participants centred on what they believed could help tackle laddish behaviours and therefore, contribute to stopping lad culture. The participants offered a multiplicity of responses where they linked their opinions and grounded their arguments on wider social discourses. From education to young boys' socialisation, the young women in the group identified some overarching problems that they viewed as promoting lad culture, allowing them to develop approaches that could help to stop it. However, this was marked by a pessimistic view of the problem, as both Tori and Jess deemed lad culture as almost impossible to eradicate.

Extract 15:

Tori:	I think it's difficult to-to erase, I don't think it's possible. Just cos of what it is-it's almost like an innate thing like, cos you grow up into it so quickly without realising. I don't think it's possible to erase it entirely.
Jess:	I don't think it's possible either because it forms you like, basically from when you're born.
Tori:	Yeah!
Jess:	It's just-
Tori:	-more than anything-
Jess:	It's the difference between genders kinda influences it from when you're younger. Then like, the guys think it's acceptable to just be better than the girls and they turn into lads.

(Meeting 3, 14th March 2018)

In the extract, the participants engaged in two deterministic constructs: first, biologization, and, second, interpreting lad culture as a product of socialisation. Tori described lad culture as "*almost like an innate thing*", therefore suggesting that misogynistic and sexist behaviours are "*almost"* an inherent part of malehood and growing up male. In Jess' account, there was a stronger link between social discourses and laddish behaviour. Even though Jess also pinpointed lad culture as intrinsic, inasmuch as she located its starting point at birth, she also considered the "*difference between genders*" as part of socialization rituals that reproduce lad culture. Specifically, Jess highlighted men and young boys' construction of the masculine as superior to the feminine. This was, for Jess, a determining factor in the process of becoming a lad, and therefore of reproducing lad culture, as it shaped the boys' perception of themselves as "*better*" than the girls, which could subsequently result in sexist attitudes towards women later in life. In the end, however, despite their differences, both Jess and Tori offered deterministic opinions on lad culture as something that was extremely difficult, almost impossible to erase due to being ingrained, either biologically or socially.

Despite the pessimism expressed, the participants were able to identify some strategies that they believed might help to start eradicating sexist laddish behaviours from a younger age. Jess and Tori developed their own ideas on education.

Extract 16:

Jess:	But we're always taught that it should be equal and equality and stuff. So, you kinda got that […] But it's never put into practice.
Tori:	Yeah, I think the idea of a module on it would be ideal but at a younger age when you're more, not even susceptible, when you're more into that culture than you realise. Because like, for example for us we said it was a lot of high school time [referring to the amount of time young people spend in school environment]. So even if it was put into that, even stuff like, learning about sex education when you're younger. It's very awkward and it's very segregated. But why not turn that into a way to teach people equality. And to teach, the young-
Jess:	-do the lesson on like, sex education together.

(Meeting 3, 14th March 2018)

Above, the participants highlighted the lack of effectiveness in teaching gender inequality, which they seemed to connect to sex education. In responding to this, Tori argued for stronger instruction in equality and sex education at a younger age, a period she deemed more "*susceptible*" to lad culture. This reflects Bay-Cheng (2003) work, where she argues school-based sexual education not only plays a crucial role in providing essential information to teens on sexuality, it also is fundamental in teen's construction of their own sexual behaviour. However, Naezer, Rommes and Jansen (2017) point to some problems that could arise in teaching sex education in schools. In their research on Dutch sex educational policies, Naezer, Rommes and Jansen (2017) state that sex education can result in inhibiting empowerment, rather than encouraging it, by only allowing selective (and often male-focused) information based on the teachers' interests to be taught in classrooms. In connection to this, the participants reflected on the limited knowledge they received as part of their male-oriented sex education later in the conversation, saying "*The sex education that we got was basically how to put on a condom*" and "*we were mainly told about male contraception and like male sex education*". This highlights the problematics of sex education as explored by Naezer, Rommes and Jansen (2017) inasmuch as it only provides a limited and male-focused instruction. In her talk, Tori suggested changing the current and restricted sex education to turn it into an opportunity to teach equality in an unsegregated manner. In this regard, sex education emerged in this extract

as an educative strategy that, if based on equality, could contribute to the fight against sexist lad culture.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have examined the discursive-affective dimensions of lad culture described by a group of female MA students of colour. The participants' understanding of lad culture was carried out in various ways in which affect, social discourses and agency intersected. In the analysis above, I have explored the women's sense-making of lad culture in four specific ways. In the first part of the chapter, I argued the participants' self-positioning as unknowing subjects enabled them to critically investigate the ways lad culture worked through notions of coolness, intentionality and race. The lads were seen as performing a 'cool' identity, which I explored through Jackson and Dempster's work (2009). Drawing on this work, I argued the 'laddish coolness' involved the performing of an effortless laddish identity where the work men do to be read as lads remains invisible, therefore giving the illusion of authenticity to their performance. The participants attributed the reasons for lads' intentionality to a structural system that enables racist and misogynistic attitudes in society. The women engaged in a further exploration of lad culture that rendered it heavily racially segregated, yet fairly homogeneous regarding their inter-group differences.

Second, I explored the participants' experiences and encounters with the lads through the ideas of space and agency. In the analysis, I identified space as a focus of the stories shared. The women rendered the lads as occupying certain spaces, which consequently involved a constant negotiation of agency and a careful navigation of space. I examined the gendered spatial dynamics of lad culture, highlighting the agentic capacities of the women, which varied in articulation and performance. These agentic capacities were diverse, and ranged from engaging in continuous moving around space to an open reclamation of it, where the notion of the 'strong black woman' emerged as shaping one of the participants' sense-making. In this discussion, I rendered all the participants' stories as agentic, inasmuch as they were constantly engaged in decision-making practices to ensure their safety.

Third, through the extracts, I identified two main mechanisms of power employed by the lads to maintain their social hegemony over women. I recognised these two affective mechanisms as the laddish gaze and the laddish laughter. I explored the laddish gaze in a Foucauldian sense

to examine how this gaze, as a fluid medium of power, enabled the interiorization of gendered and hierarchized power relations. I explored laddish laughter as featuring the participants' stories in the form of a laddish strategy to construct their masculinity and counter the challenges the participants posed to their hegemonic power. In connection to this, and moving onto the fourth point, I examined the participants' strategies to resist lad culture. These were framed with negativity by the women, who described lad culture as innate or learnt and thus, difficult to erase. Despite this, the women identified some points of moving forward, which included a solid instruction in gender equality and sex education.

In the next chapter, I open up further the discussion of space that I touched on above by outlining the theoretical framework of 'sticky atmospheres'. As mentioned, space was regularly drawn on by participants across the study. Therefore, bringing their different accounts together demonstrates the importance of space in the circulation of affect and the construction and experience of lad culture.

Chapter 6: Cutting in: Sticky Atmospheres

"Atmospheres do not float free from the bodies that come together and apart to compose situations. Affective qualities emanate from the assembling of the human bodies, discursive bodies, non-human bodies, and all the other bodies that make up everyday situations".
(Anderson 2009: 80)

"Stickiness does not relate to conventions that are explicit, but to the attachments that implicitly govern ways in which signs work with other signs".
(Ahmed 2004b: 93)

In this chapter, I analyse the spatial qualities of affect to provide a further understanding of the socio-spatial workings of lad culture, therefore making sense of lad culture as a multidimensional layered concept. To do this, I explore Ahmed's (2014a[2004]; 2004b; 2004c 2009) discussion of 'sticky affects' and Ben Anderson's (2009)[21] notion of 'affective atmospheres'. The quotes above, despite paying attention to different qualities of affect, share one thing in common: affect is a productive force that is in constant tension with other bodies, signs and atmospheres. The productivity of affect shapes spaces, and the interactions that happen wherein. Bringing these two ideas together, I propose the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' to refer to the spaces where lad culture is present and where it establishes affective relationships with the environment, the bodies and the subjectivities.

6.1 STICKINESS: STICKY AFFECTS AND STICKY OBJECTS

For Ahmed (2014a[2004]), objects, signs and events are affective when they press upon us and leave an impression. For an impression to take place, there must be a physical and/or metaphorical proximity to the object in question. For example, in a situation of sexual harassment understood as part of lad culture, his body being too close to my body might result in a negative impression – I am feeling very uncomfortable and I try to move away. This distressful encounter is felt by the body and impresses upon it, leaving a mark that sticks.

[21] I am aware of the intrinsic differences in Anderson and Ahmed's take on affect. Anderson's theoretical developing is inspired in a Deleuze and Guattari framework, whereas Ahmed's is built on understanding the phenomena of emotions, therefore developing a phenomenological study of affect. Despite these differences, I see both Anderson and Ahmed's theories as complementary. In looking at different angles of affect, I bring them together in order to provide a fuller account of affect.

Ahmed argues there are different types of impressions, all associated to being left with a mark "of one surface upon other". Ahmed (2014a[2004]) explains that some impressions are produced through repetition, in histories that have left impressions. Consequently, to affect and to be affected is underpinned by historical and social factors. For example, the word 'slut' is shaped by past histories of sexism that linked certain women to socially and morally reprehensible behaviours of lust and dirt (Blackwell 2004; Attwood 2007; Ringrose and Renold 2012), therefore making it an affectively charged word. As a result, getting called 'slut' would impress upon me by leaving a mark of shame and misogynistic humiliation. To make further sense of the working of these impressions, I first outline Ahmed's discussion of the 'inside out/ the outside in' model below.

In talking about the histories that shape an object's affectivity, Ahmed (2014a[2004]) explores the mobility of emotions and what this circulation does or undoes. In doing so, she critiques both the 'inside out' and the 'outside in' model of emotions (9), as they both presuppose the ownership of emotions, either internally (i.e. I *own* my emotions) or externally (i.e. the group *ows the emotions, e.g. crowd psychology*). For Ahmed (2014a[2004]) both models reproduce the idea that emotions live contained within bodies and objects and therefore, are an inherent quality of subjects, either individually (inside in) or in group (outside in). Ahmed argues emotions do not reside in specific bodies or spaces, rather, they are constantly moving. It is this continuous transit that makes emotions bind subjects together, as with each movement they connect and open bodies to each other (2004b). In this regard, Ahmed (2014a[2004]: 10) rejects both models of emotions arguing they produce the effects of surfaces that create a fictive distinction between the inside and the outside.

By contrast, it is through impressions that the effects of surfaces are generated (Ahmed 2014a[2004]). To return to the harassment example: not only does this distressing encounter leave an impression of anxiety and discomfort, it also works, according to Ahmed, to leave the impression of a surface. In this light, Ahmed argues it is through painful, or in this case, uneasy, encounters, with objects and bodies, that we become aware of our own surface. We recognise it as something that can hurt, and it is this hurting through which we acknowledge the surface of our bodies ("it's painful") and judge it ("it's bad") (Ahmed 2004c: 29). In fact, Ahmed suggests a reconfiguration of bodily space as enacted by the recognition of something as painful: you move away from the object causing the hurt in an attempt to protect your body, your skin, your surface, from the pain. Regarding the object of emotion, Ahmed (2014a[2004])

argues it takes shape through circulation, through moving between bodies, inasmuch as circulation, generates the effects of a surface. Regarding this, Ahmed (2014a[2004]) argues that what circulates is not in fact emotions, but the objects of emotions themselves. In this circulation, an accumulation of affect is produced, and consequently, objects become sticky (2014a[2004]: 10).

Ahmed draws on Freudian psychoanalysis to explore the movement of affect and its resulting accumulation (2004b: 120). Freudian psychoanalysis argues primitive desires and impulses are repressed in the conscious mind and as a result, are found in the unconscious. This repression of the object of desire is displaced onto a different object, which causes misunderstanding and a wrong coupling of the impulses to an idea to which they are not related (Freud 1915[1963]). For example, in the Little Hans case, a boy with an apparent phobia of horses was found to, in fact, fear his father. The horses, Freud argued, were a symbol of his father, a figure which the conscious mind had repressed and displaced with horses (Freud 1909).

As Ahmed (2004b) acknowledges, the conscious mind does not repress the feelings themselves, but the initial idea the feeling was linked to. Ahmed (2004b) argues this theorisation allows psychoanalysis to highlight the mobility of emotions and the different associations that get established in the circulation of emotionality. Constantly in motion, feelings are taken through different levels of signification, moving through sticky connections. This non-residential transitory space is where, for Ahmed, affect resides. The non-residence of affect is underpinned by the sticky connections it establishes between objects, signs and ideas. For example, within the context of lad culture, the sign of a pint of beer at a university pub is sticky, connected to the smell, the feel of the room, and often, the bodies of lads. A beer drank anywhere else might have different impressions. In this regard, it could be argued that it is the space of the ‘uni pub’ which makes beer stick to lad culture. It is because of the continuous mobility of affect that the space of a university pub sticks in particular ways.

The stickiness of affect is, according to Ahmed (2004b), a result of both the accumulation of affect and an affective economy, which I explore below. Ahmed draws on Marxist theory to explore the accumulation of affect. She argues feelings work as a form of capital, where affect gets produced only as a result and effect of its circulation. Ahmed uses Marx’s formula M-C-M (money to commodity to money) and surplus value, and transposes it to the movement of affect. The M-C-M formula describes the transformation of money (M) into commodities (C)

and the exchange of these commodities into money (M). This constant circulation and exchange generate an accumulated value to money, which increases its value with each transaction. Within the context of affect, Ahmed (2004b) argues the circulation of signs or objects result in the accumulation of affective value, which can result in making some bodies stickier than others. For example, lads' bodies are stickier than others because of their contingencies with aggression, misogyny and past histories of harassment which make the accumulation of affect higher. Ahmed (2004b) argues, the sticky accumulation of affect can also be understood as part of a moral economy. To explain this, she draws on Skeggs (2004) and Bourdieu (1984[2010]). Bourdieu explores how taste is influenced by how good something is already thought to be. This idea is taken up by Skeggs (2004), who claims the social distinction between certain practices as 'good' or 'bad' is grounded on the attribution of different moral values. In this way, 'good' subjects are created at the expense of 'bad' subjects. For example, white working-class women's behaviour is regarded as 'bad' because of the association between class and im/morality (Skeggs 2004: 7). Within the context of sticky objects, some objects are sticky because they are read as being good or bad, as being the cause of happiness or unhappiness (Ahmed 2009: 35).

Considering all the above, Ahmed (2014a[2004]; 2004b) argues stickiness is non-residential, it cannot be owned and is produced through movement and historical contingencies. Consequently, sticky objects cannot be pinpointed to a specific origin. Following this, Ahmed focuses on what stickiness *does*, rather than its source. In this regard, she argues, stickiness does something to other objects, in what they become sticky as a result of their encounter through transference, meaning, a sticky object can 'pick up' other objects and leave them sticky. For example, syrup running on the counter leaves the counter sticky, and any object that gets in contact with it after the spillage. In what concerns signs, referring to something as disgusting, results in the transference of the stickiness of this word onto the object itself: calling lad culture 'disgusting' transfers the sticky affects of the descriptor to lad culture itself, and more specifically, the lads. In this regard, the word 'disgusting' sticks to the object of lad culture and the bodies of the lads, leaving an impression upon them and transferring its stickiness onto them. Consequently, the object becomes disgusting through the utterance of it being disgusting. This, for Ahmed, exemplifies the performative qualities of stickiness. She draws on Butler's idea of performativity (1993), where a signifier generates that what it names through its necessary repetition (see Chapter 4 for a full discussion on Butlarian discursive performativity), to describe how the performativity of sticky signs also aligns with this logic.

The speech act of depicting something as disgusting not only includes the transfer of the stickiness to the object, but also to the subject, who becomes 'disgusted' in the process. The talking subject is moved by the stickiness of both the sign and the object and in turn, becomes affected (2014a[2004]: 94). For example, when I call a lad disgusting, we both (the lad and I) become sticky with disgust – I am disgusted by how disgusting the lad is, and the lad becomes disgusting through my disgust. This process evidences the performativity and the relationality of sticky affects.

Exploring the sticky affective fabric of lad culture allows for a further understanding of the workings of misogyny and its affective underpinnings. In enquiring about the affective moving qualities some objects have, Ahmed (2009) maps the intentionality of affect. Ahmed argues that to experience an object as affective, that is, as sticky, we are not only directed towards that object specifically, but also to its conditions of arrival and the surroundings of the object (2009: 33). However, this affectivity is also shaped by the affective state of the body upon the object's arrival, meaning the impression that we will receive will be shaped by our affective situation (36). Ahmed applies this idea to Brennan's famous sentence in her book *The Transmission of Affect*: "Is there anyone who has not, at least once, walked into a room and 'felt the atmosphere'?" (Brennan 2004: 1). Ahmed suggests the way we feel this atmosphere may depend on our arrival or even, the atmosphere itself. The mood we are in influences the atmosphere, but it does not determine it. For example, Ahmed (2014b) draws on personal experience and recounts arriving with anxiety to work, only to feel eased afterwards through the atmosphere. Following this, Ahmed, argues the affect shaping atmospheres, bodies and objects is mobilised by the people who are around. Consequently, she argues, this affectivity can be picked up and put down by others (2014a[2004]: 222). For example, a lively club's atmosphere could be changed by a situation of assault; after the incident, the atmosphere could be picked up again by the people in that space that keep on dancing. Within the idea of this atmosphere, Ahmed explains how feelings can get stuck to bodies, situations and objects (2014a[2004]).

Despite Ahmed's brief mention of atmospheres, her work on affect does not explore the affective qualities that shape atmospheres and that also shape the circulation of affect in certain spaces. A look at space, affect and the creation of atmospheres as a result of affective entanglements is needed to further the understanding of lad culture and its impressions upon

HE students' subject position and construction of subjectivity. In order to investigate affect and atmospheres, I turn to Ben Anderson's theorisation of 'affective atmospheres' below.

6.2 ATMOSPHERES AND AFFECT

Before moving onto Ben Anderson's idea of 'affective atmospheres', a brief literature review on the term is pertinent. 'Affective atmospheres' has been a widely developed concept in the field of human geography and studies of space and architecture (Anderson 2009; 2006; McCormack 2008; Bissell 2010; Böhme 1993; Bissell 2009; Shaw 2014; Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b). This body of literature has been concerned with the relationship between bodies, space and affectivity, and the changes in affectivity and affective experiences within particular spaces.

Böhme (1993) attempts to define the concept of atmosphere through an ecological aesthetic approach, which pays attention to the bodily and sensual state of people in given environments. In looking at how people feel in different environments, Böhme's ecological aesthetics moves beyond a natural sciences description of environments and maps its socio-economic underpinnings. Using this approach, Böhme identifies the equivocal status of atmospheres and links them to Benjamin's (1936[2008]) idea of 'aura'. In his work, Benjamin argued the technical reproduction of art lacked its presence in time and space, and thus, its aura. For Benjamin, aura is something that can be breathed and perceived when one lets himself be and "absorb[s] it [the aura] into one's own bodily state of being" (Böhme 1993: 118). Böhme suggests Benjamin's conceptualization of aura is linked to the observer's receptivity and mood. According to Böhme, Benjamnin's theorisation of aura is crucial for the later development of the concept of atmosphere, as it allowed him to draw similarities between aura and atmosphere, both perceived in an "indeterminate spatially extended quality of feeling" (1993: 118).

In this regard, Böhme (1993) describes atmosphere as paying attention to the object/subject intermediation. In doing so, he argues that atmospheres are both and neither subjective and objective simultaneously. He defines them as possessing thing-like qualities, belonging to what enables their presence, and also belonging to the subjects that sense them in space (122). Böhme's description of atmosphere is vague and diffuse. However, in his ecological aesthetic formulation, 'atmos' is understood as a quality to fill available spaces like gas, while 'sphere' refers to the specific spatial organisation into the form of a surface (Anderson 2009; Diaz-

Feranndez and Evans 2019b). For Böhme "[t]he primary "object" of perception is atmospheres […] against whose background the analytic regard distinguishes such things as objects, forms, colours etc." Nevertheless, Böhme argues atmospheres themselves cannot be located, as they don't have boundaries since they move as flows of "affective powers" (119).

This flowing quality of the affective atmosphere is shared by Derek McCormack (2008). For Derek McCormack, atmospheres are distributed through the ethereal, diffusing themselves through the air, "yet palpable, a quality of environmental immersion that registers in and through sensing bodies while also remaining diffuse" (413). Bissell (2010) draws on Derek McCormack to explore the affective atmospheres through nonrepresentational registers in British public transport. Bissell (2010) argues atmospheres are not passively present in social settings, rather, they are powerful and can exert disciplinary effects over the bodies inhabiting a certain space. Researching the pre-personal affects travelling on public transport, Bissell explains affective atmospheres emerge as going beyond the restrictive "vocabularies of discourse. This opens up and expands the remit of what constitutes the 'social' by reconfiguring the relations between technologies, matter, and bodies" (284). In this regard, affect does not emerge out of conversational practices, rather, it appears in inter-connectedness.

Bissell's formulation resembles Shaw's (2014). In his work on nighttime economy, Shaw (2014) employs a Deleuzian theoretical framework and depicts atmospheres as a "placed assemblage" where different affects, agents and bodies coexist (1, 3). This coexistence mobilises affective atmospheres that, despite their immaterial qualities, are subjected to specific orderings and boundaries. In exploring the workings of affective atmospheres within the Newcastle nighttime scene, Shaw (2014) explains how their presence shape the experiences of the workers of the nighttime economy, more particularly cab drivers and street cleaners. Simultaneously, Shaw also highlights the effects these night professionals have on the affective atmospheres themselves, pushing their geographical boundaries and also managing their excess. As a result, Shaw argues that affective atmospheres work in assemblage with different bodies and practices. Consequently, they cannot be reduced to the bodies that take part in their eruption (Anderson 2009: 80). Shaw's theorisation on affective atmospheres is helpful in providing an understanding of atmospheres as being constantly emerging and shaped by socio-geographical situations. Within the context of this research, and drawing on Shaw's ideas, I argue sticky lad culture works in an assemblage with a variety of agents: lads' bodies, the spaces where laddish behaviours exist more predominately (e.g. clubs, pubs) and the bodies of

those not participating in lad culture. I suggest this assemblage plugs in these different factors and mobilises affective atmospheres as a result of the circulation of affect between them.

In his work, Ben Anderson (2009) questions the relationship between atmospheres and affect. Ben Anderson considers the term 'atmosphere' as productive, since it allows us to conceptualise affect as possessing spatial qualities, what he describes as "intensive spatialities of atmos-pheres" (80). In this regard, Ben Anderson depicts affective atmospheres as those which surround environments, people, bodies and objects. A valuable element of Anderson's formulation is his understanding of atmospheres as "ill-defined indefinite something" (78). In this light, atmospheres are described as having an unfinished quality, hence belonging to multiple relations. For example, the affect that circulates in a club can be described as created by the space itself, its lighting and furnishing, its geo-location, the people present in it (clientele, staff); or an assemblage of everything above. Ben Anderson (2009) argues that, despite atmospheres emanating from certain bodies, they are not reducible to them, in fact, they exceed them with their affective qualities. This irreducibility gives them impersonal and transpersonal intensity, as affective atmospheres occur prior and parallel to the construction of subjectivity and in-between human and non-human actors (78). Ben Anderson explains: "[a]tmospheres are a kind of indeterminate affective 'excess' through which intensive space–times can be created" (80). For Ben Anderson, it is this indefinite and undetermined quality of affective atmospheres that enable them to capture the ambiguity of affect itself, in both its representational and nonrepresentational forms (80). This element of Ben Anderson's account sits closely with my own interpretation of affect. I see affect as exceeding the mind/body binary, and therefore, tangled in the dynamic relationship between social and psychic life (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b).

Within the context of lad culture, Ben Anderson's idea of affective atmospheres allows me to deepen my understanding of laddish-enabling spaces, such as clubs, pubs, etc,. and what they entail for the people who are also present in them, since the affective atmosphere helps me comprehend "affective experience as occurring beyond, around, and alongside the formation of subjectivity" (Anderson 2006: 77). Ben Anderson's theorisation, in combination with Ahmed's, also enables me to understand how these laddish spaces become sticky.

In this cutting-in chapter, I use Ben Anderson's notion of affective atmosphere alongside Ahmed's theorisation of sticky affects in a complimentary way. Taking Ahmed's socio-

material-psychoanalytic-discursive theorisation of sticky affects in combination with Ben Anderson's geographical understanding of affective atmospheres as both impersonal and transpersonal allows me to develop the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' in that: 1) both concepts interpret affect as historically and culturally located; 2) neither attributes affect as belonging to a particular individual or space, but they understand it as relational and in constant circulation between bodies and objects; and 3) both highlight the ambiguity of affect as slipping between nonrepresentation and representation (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b). In the next section, I provide a brief application of the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' to the participants' voices to explore how they negotiate the sticky lad culture. The notion is then further referenced in the following chapter, with the concept of sticky atmospheres woven through to explore how space and affect come to shape the discussions of the Gender Society group.

6.3 STICKY ATMOSPHERES

In relation to the research, the atmospheres that emanated from the participants' discussions on lad culture could certainly be considered as sticky. In the conversations, affect was transferred into situations and people, and, due to its contingencies with misogyny, the stories shared became saturated with affect and therefore, sticky. However, the sticky atmospheres produced through the affective circulation shaping lad culture do not assume the non-changeability of the atmosphere. As Ben Anderson (2009) points out, atmospheres are always in transformation. This transformative characteristic of atmospheres is reflected in the participants' talk. In the extract below, the participants highlighted the changes in the atmosphere in relation to lad culture within the day/night binary. Nighttime spaces were described as one of the main enablers of lad culture, hence as the spaces for the circulation of sticky atmospheres.

Extract 1 [Group 1]

Rose	I feel like, 'lad culture' and clubbing come hand in hand, me and Anna know a group of boys, when you see them in the day time, cos they on some of our courses, we see them all the time in like our University buildings and they're awkward as hell, quiet, don't speak to us, but on a night out, they are crazy, they like…
Silvia	Entitled?
Rose	Yeah, like…

(Meeting 1, 8th February 2017)

Above, Rose tried to make sense of the differences in her experiences of lad culture between day and night time. She depicted lad culture as inextricably connected to the spaces of clubs.

She established a clear-cut difference between the lads' behaviour during the day time, where she described them as "*awkward*", and during the night, where she marked them as "*crazy*", also agreeing with my interruption, where I depicted them as "*entitled*"[22]. In this regard, the spaces and specific situations where lad culture was located played a determinant role in both the laddishness being displayed – or lack of thereof – and the atmosphere that was created. This sharp distinction was picked up by other groups where the participants discussed specifically the different environments that shaped the presence of laddish attitudes. These discussions emerged out of an activity where we all wrote down the feelings we associated to lad culture.

Extract 2 [Group 4]

Silvia	I put sort of almost the same, I put being guarded, being wary, is that how you say it? And not knowing what to expect. I mean, as a female if you go into a club you-look how the thing is gonna play out, is someone going to be a creep-
Belle	Yeah-
Silvia	Or not.
Ollie	That must be the worst thing of all-
Belle	For a woman?
Ollie	Yeah, that sort of atmosphere where some guy just won't leave you alone.
Keith	Yeah.

(Meeting 1, 5th November 2017)

Ollie described the atmosphere as the "*worst*" experience for women on nights out, provided that it involved constant harassment from men. In doing this, Ollie pinned down the atmosphere as the most negative factor in that specific situation, rather than marking out the guy that "*won't leave you alone*" as the main problem. Consequently, Ollie foregrounded the idea that affect, and as a result, stickiness, does not reside in particular bodies (e.g. the insistent guy's body) or signs, rather it accumulates, creating atmospheres with gas like qualities: travelling, circulating and becoming stickier. The negative atmosphere did not emanate from the guy himself alone, but emerged in inter-connectedness and through circulation among bodies, objects and spaces.

[22] As explained in Chapter 4, I actively participated in the conversations and discussions with the participants. Following my interest in developing a feminist methodology in this research, I don't see myself as impartial. Within a positivist paradigm my intervention in the conversation in this extract might be seen as leading the discussion and leading questions. However, this is not the case in a research design that draws on feminist and participatory methodologies where knowledge is co-constructed by the participants and me.

It could also be argued that, in Ollie's talk, the atmosphere appeared to enable harassment. It was the atmosphere itself that filled the space and framed the situation, inciting laddish behaviours. Belle and Ollie identified the particular group of people where this stickiness stuck the most: on the bodies of women. In highlighting this, Ollie also exposed how the stickiness of atmospheres were experienced differently. In the conversation, women are thought to experience the worst due to incessant male attention. In attributing the "*worst*" to the harassment carried out by lads, the lads emerge as creating an impression in this particular nighttime setting.

In analysing affective atmospheres, it is pertinent to discuss the way affect circulates and the reasons why it accumulates and sticks to some bodies and signs rather than others. For example, as explained earlier, sticky signs exert a binding effect through their repetition resulting in a performative effect: they create the very thing they designate (Ahmed 2004b). I explore this in the extract below where two male participants, Keith and Ollie, explore the performative stickiness of the label 'lad':

Extract 3 [Group 4]

Silvia	Ehm, what you were saying about being in a club and seeing a group of boys and maybe like, labelling them as lads, do you think doing that, the labelling or considering them as lads for people-
Keith:	-forces them to be lads, sort of thing-
Silvia:	-yeah, or can change like, the dynamics of the atmosphere in the club or-
Ollie:	-definitely-
Silvia:	-or in the club-
Ollie:	-yeah, for sure-
Keith:	-if you-if you say there's a group of lads at the bar, would you say it's a group of lads you-it has a different feeling, maybe-
Ollie:	-yeah-
Keith:	-if it's a few guys at the bar, it's like, 'oh, watch out for this group of lads', and you're kinda like more wary-
Ollie:	-the thing is yeah, it's more-it's more like, it's tricky for us to answer that, innit, cos, it's like eh, for, there's not so much, just like-
Keith:	-we're not as-affected by it-
Ollie:	-yeah.

(Meeting 2, 12th November 2017)

In the first part of the extract, Keith highlighted the performativity of the sign 'lads' by suggesting the label "*forces*" men to be lads. Thus, in Keith's talk, the utterance of the word 'lad' being attributed to a man is seen as performative, since it generates the very lad it

describes. In the second part, both Keith and Ollie further this argument by discussing the different affective implications labelling men as 'lads' has on bars' atmospheres. Keith suggests referring to men in a bar as "*a group of lads*" has "*a different feeling*". With this, Keith was possibly pointing to the past histories shaping the word 'lad' (e.g. misogyny, harassment). As a result, he established a direct relation between calling a group of men "*a group of lads*" and feeling "*more wary*". In fact, Keith constructed the group of lads as something to be on guard about – "*oh, watch out for this group of lads*" – thus highlighting the affective impression the labelling of 'lad' generates. Hence, the atmosphere becomes sticky through the speech act of calling men 'lads', as the label 'lads' is an affectively charged one. In this extract, both Keith and Ollie underlined the different affective impression (or lack of, e.g. "*we're not as-affected by it*") the sticky atmospheres in the club exerted over them from their position as men. Sticky atmospheres appear as non-universal and, as Ahmed points out, they can be picked up by some, they can also be put down by others (2004b), such as Ollie and Keith.

Regarding the affectivity these sticky atmospheres involve for women, some female participants discussed how different laddish practices can make one feel intimidated or in constant anticipation of the worst.

Extract 4 [Group 5]

Jess:	It depends I think, like, if there's just a group of lads there doing their own thing, minding their own business, not getting involved with other people, then it's fine. But like, if if-they're being overpowering and they're like, saying slogans and stuff then maybe it ruins the atmosphere a bit and you don't really want to go back to that place.
Tori:	It feels intimidating sometimes-
Jess:	Yeah
Tori:	-to see, even if they're not doing anything, like if you're walking past and you wanna go somewhere and you look and you're like 'oh, there's quite a big group of lads in there'. Do we want to be in a situation where something could happen or should we just leave it? So yeah, I do think it depends but-
Ash:	-actually, I agree-
Tori:	-it's-it's a consideration when you go somewhere.

(Meeting 2, 8th March 2018)

In this extract, the participants reflected on the cognitive process of monitoring one's behaviour when facing situations involving lads. Although they explained there were some occasions where lads did not pose a threat since they were "*minding their own business*", they argued there were other situations where laddish behaviour "*ruins the atmosphere*". In the participants'

talk, the ruining of the atmosphere was experienced with tension and anticipation for the possible negative outcomes that could emanate from it. Tori exemplified the cognitive process she was involved in when anticipating the possibility of a laddish encounter: she gave account of engaging in self-reflection when considering going somewhere. In this regard, the ruined atmosphere can also be felt as something to avoid or to contemplate in relation to one's safety. When Tori claimed "*it's a consideration when you go somewhere*", she exposed the atmosphere's saturation of affect and how she felt it. Thus, in Tori's sense-making, feeling the atmosphere works to question one's behaviour or presence in certain spaces.

The labour of having to consider what physical spaces to occupy also exposed the emotional labour the participants went through before deciding whether to go out. It could be argued that what the participants anticipated was a sticky atmosphere, shaped by past histories surrounding lad culture and their previous encounters with the lads. Atmospheres and their stickiness can therefore be foreseen by others, which consequently, turns the foreseers into sticky bodies as well. The anticipation leaves an impression on them, they are moved, both emotionally and physically, inasmuch as they consider avoiding certain spaces in anticipation of the atmosphere's stickiness. This process was enabled through the transference of affect between the sticky atmosphere and the prediction of the participants (Ahmed 2004b). This highlights the impossibility of escaping stickiness: stickiness travels, becomes stickier and leaves impressions on bodies, situations and spaces as it moves between them (2004b).

6.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have theorised the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' by drawing on Ahmed's (2014a[2004]; 2004b; 2009) 'sticky affects' and Ben Anderson's (2009) 'affective atmospheres'. Despite the visible differences in both Ben Anderson and Ahmed's approaches to affect, I bring their ideas together and understand them as complimentary, inasmuch as both see affect as historically and culturally located, relational and in-between representation and nonrepresentation. Drawing on these theories, I understand the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' as felt environments that are shaped and structured by the bodies, the space and the affect involved in them. I argue sticky atmospheres are inherently part of lad culture and the spatial landscape that enables laddish practices, such as the nighttime spaces (e.g. pubs, clubs). The concept of sticky atmospheres therefore provides a framework for understanding the spatial

elements that contribute to the reproduction of lad culture and offers a critical lens through which affect can be explored from a psychic, cultural and social approach.

In the following chapter, I expand on the concept of sticky atmospheres to analyse the participants' encounters with lad culture within the confines of the nighttime economy. I explore the ways the members of a Gender Equality Student Union made sense of lad culture and the men they associated with it. To do this, I draw on the idea of sticky atmospheres and introduce the concept of the 'laddish masquerade'. The latter borrows from Connell's idea of 'hegemonic masculinity' and McRobbie's notion of the 'postfeminist masquerade', to analyse the workings of masculinity(ies) within the context of lad culture.

Chapter 7: *"I'm Strong So I Kicked Him With My Doc. Martens*": Laddish Masquerade and Navigation of Sticky Laddish Nighttime Spaces

In this chapter, I explore the discourses drawn by the members of a Gender Equality Society. The Gender Equality Student Union members were recruited due to their interest in gender relations, feminism and equality, three crucial points that this research builds upon. Even though the participants were not recruited for any special knowledge on lad culture, it became clear during the period of data collection that they were familiar with it, and some described themselves as having engaged in laddish activities in the past. For example, two women conceded that they had participated in laddish chanting at rugby matches and engaged in heavy drinking during nights out with their friends. Such claims were not treated with shame – participating in lad culture was seen as almost unavoidable in certain social situations.

In what follows, I explore the discursive-affective dimensions of the participants' accounts of their experiences with lad culture. First, the participants positioned themselves as knowing subjects of lad culture, which allowed them to make sense of their experiences with the lads from their location as knowers. Second, the construction of themselves as knowing enabled them to distinguish between the *"real"* lads and the 'wannabe lads'. However, this differentiation was not uncomplicated. For example, some participants accounted for the difficulties of discerning who were offensive lads or friendly guys. In this chapter, I look at this entanglement through the concept of the 'laddish masquerade', drawing on McRobbie's (2009) formulation of the 'postfeminist masquerade' and Connell's concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' (1995). I argue the laddish masquerade establishes a hyper-masculine template identity for men and works to re-secure masculine hegemony in a socio-cultural context where it is perceived to be losing power due to the increased popularity of feminism.

Finally, I explore the encounters the participants had with lad culture building on the concept of 'sticky atmospheres'. The group located the presence of lad culture within the spaces of the nighttime economy, such as pubs and clubs. To analyse the relationships between the participants, the nighttime scene and lad culture, I expand the concept of the 'sticky atmospheres' theorised in the previous chapter. Looking at sticky atmospheres allows me to inquire into the affective and spatial dimensions that also construct lad culture, and how this

influences the participants' navigation of these spaces. At the end of this chapter, I contemplate the participants' strategies for erasing lad culture in Higher Education. The participants enumerated a number of strategies: from consent workshops to the creation of safe spaces. I identify and contrast the socio-cultural discourses they drew on to inform their approaches to tackling laddish cultures.

7.1 KNOWING THE (NON)LADS: LADDISH MASQUERADE

In contrast to Chapter 5, the participants in this group presented themselves as knowing and able to critically analyse the lads. This knowledge was constructed from pre-existing stereotypes that described those participating in lad culture as close to traditional ways of doing masculinity, involving homosociality, excessive alcohol consumption and misogynistic behaviour (Hammarén and Johansson 2014; de Visser and Smith 2007; Robinson 2005). From this knowledge, the group was also able to elaborate on those men who were considered to be 'trying to be' lads but inevitably failing to due to not having the appropriate appearance. Despite their knowledgeable position, having to distinguish between the 'lads' and 'men-who-were-trying-to-be-lads' was full of contradictions. In these negotiations, the 'lad' identity emerged as highly unstable. In this chapter, I argue that there was a masquerade-ness in the qualities through which laddish masculinities were constructed. Below, I first consider how the participants constructed the figure of the lad through notions of success and, second, how they positioned the 'men-who-were-trying-to-be-lad' through the concept of the 'masquerade' (McRobbie 2007; Riviere 1929).

7.1.1 (UN)SUCCESSFUL LADS

The participants produced the figure of the lad as underpinned by a dualist relationship between those deemed to be "*successful lads*", and those that tried to act like lads but failed to in becoming 'real' lads. Consequently, the group emphasised the authenticity of some laddish identities while highlighting the bogus enactments of particular men. The participants argued the main distinguishing factor to discern the 'authentic lad' from the 'wannabe lad' was based on achieving specific looks and aesthetics – and not so much on the actual laddish behaviours. To illustrate this, Rose and Anne used as an example a group of boys who, in their opinion, fit into lad culture without being "*really lads*".

Extract 1:

Rose Uhm, the-the group of boys that we see on and about they are not really lads, they just sort of, fit into that kind of culture, the boys we were talking about earlier.

Anne Yeah, they are… but they-only certain… it-it's gonna sound very harsh to say but only certain, only for a few of them work to be like successful lads, and I think that's in terms of, once again, it's also how women act as well cos… we still, despite that we, intrinsically link lads to men, girls can act like that as well, girls can go on nights out just to-to get off with someone. I'm not gonna lie, I went on a night out just because I knew someone I fancied was going on a night out. It sounds awful when you say it out loud but that's like, sometimes you subconsciously are thinking "oh I'm gonna see them". But I think, to be a successful lad in terms of like your, sexual conquests and and that-in term-of you nee-you nee-, you need a certain look and it doesn't matter if you try to act a certain way, if you don't have that certain look. If you ain't a part of the games life, or if you aren't a pretty boy face, sometimes… you can act it but you-you will bark no bite in that kind of sense.

(Meeting 1, 8th February 2017)

Above, Rose and Anne established a distinction between the 'real' lads and 'wannabe lads'. Fitting in with lad culture, for Rose, did not automatically signify being a 'real lad'. Rose highlighted the difficulty of attaining a true lad identity, even for those that seemed to fit best within it. Anne further elaborated on this distinction and underlined the "*successful lads*" identity was only accessible and achievable for the men that had "*that certain look*". This points to the importance of the look as the real representation of the inner-self and the marker of social acceptability and status within consumer culture (Featherstone 2010).

Anne also dis-identified behaviours normally attributed to lads, such as sexual conquests, as markers of a successful lad. In fact, she made this identity category available for women, as in her opinion, and drawing on personal experiences, women can be just as laddish as some of the lads in the context of nighttime socials. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to note that Anne's account on going out with the objective of seeing the person she liked ("*I went on a night out just because I knew someone I fancied was going on a night out*") is not underscored by sexism, whereas lads' conquest are, inasmuch as they are shaped by their sexualisation and objectification of women. In terms of being successful with women, Anne emphasised the importance of one's appearance over one's behaviour in producing the 'correct' laddish aesthetics: having "*the certain look*" and the "*pretty boy face*". Without this, Anne argued "*you will bark no bite*"; thus, behaving in ways that are laddish without the correct aesthetic was nullified and deemed bogus, and so void of aggression.

In this light, the authenticity of the lad as a successful identity, produced through the attainability of particular looks, worked to highlight lad culture's instability and its heavy focus on aesthetics. The lad persona was constructed as highly volatile, since it did not depend on the man's displayed behaviour or attitude, and as carefully crafted, due to its meticulous distinct looks. Fitting with lad culture did not equate to being a lad, according to Rose and Anne. In constructing the lad in this way, the women established a power hierarchy topped by those "authentic" lads with the right looks, and at the bottom those that acted laddish (e.g. hooking up) but did not appear in the 'correct' ways.

What was also striking was Anne's choice of the word "*successful*", to refer to the group of men that were able to achieve the laddish look. This use of 'successful' positioned laddish identities in a hierarchical position, assessed against those deemed as unsuccessful. The choice of this word also indicates a neoliberal underpinning informing lad culture. Phipps and Young (2015b) explain the relationship between the increasing HE neoliberalisation and lad culture. In their work, they argue that traditional modes of misogyny and rivalry that characterise laddism have been shaped under the umbrella of neoliberalism, particularly regarding the rise of "consumerist and sexual values in the university environment" (13). This resembles the logic employed by the participants in determining who was a successful or unsuccessful lad, as the main distinguishing factor in this hierarchical division was based on achieving what was considered "*the right look*". This look was achieved by engaging in right forms of consumption. Consumption was therefore positioned as the ultimate marker of the lad. In this regard, the narrative of "consuming oneself into being" (Walkerdine 2003: 247) in the context of postfeminist culture, could be also employed within the context of laddism as both have explicit neoliberal underpinnings. Neoliberalism emphasises the diverse consumer practices that enable people to create themselves as authentic and genuine individuals (Banet-Weiser 2012). Inevitably, the achieving of the right lad look and, consequently, the right lad identity appears to be founded on a masculinity hierarchy that involves elevated and praised forms of masculinity at the top and subordinate masculinities at the bottom. I explore this below.

7.1.2 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND LADDISH MASQUERADE

In addition to the distinction between the successful and unsuccessful lads, the participants further constructed another false laddish identity: those men that not only lack the right looks, but also the confidence displayed by the real lads. Consequently, these men did not fit in with

the lads, but instead were perceived to be 'trying too hard', understood as compensating for their shortage of more masculine modes of performing gender. This was elaborated by Eve, who showed concern over how constant attempts by men to attain successful laddish identities affected men and the relationships they established with women.

Extract 2:

Eve — I think is problematic for guys as well as for girls like, obviously we get the blunt of it, the whatever of it but for guys as well, that don't fit in to that kind of lad thing like, guys that are overweight or can't get girls because they look a certain way or they are too self-conscious that can affect them more, cos they are desperate to be a part of something that they can't be, so they'll like, cos I-I, I lived in a house with two guys, one did consider himself a lad and the other one tried to be but couldn't and he'd always-all he talked about was girls and uhm… stuff but it was kind of hurtful to watch because I'm li-I'd be like "you're such a nice person but because you're trying so hard to be a lad it's blinding you of anything else" like, if he wasn't gonna, if he didn't try to act like a lad he could probably be, you know, successful in finding a girl, cos.. at the heart of it he did respect women on one-a partner but just the lad culture got the better of him. He just wanted to sleep with anyone and he talked derogatory just to fit in so… I don't like that it affects guys in that way.

(Meeting 1, 8th February 2017)

In this extract, Eve recognised the negative consequences that laddish identities had on men with subordinate masculinities. Dempster (2011) renders laddish identities as the template for contemporary masculinity, therefore highlighting their almost compulsory nature. Eve's concern echoes arguments about hegemonic masculinity and the negative effects it exercises over those men that are seen as performing subordinate masculinities (Connell 2005: 832). As explored in detail in Chapter 2, the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' refers to a type of dominant masculine identity placed in a hierarchical position that supports men's domination over women and those men regarded as inferior for reproducing forms of masculinities that do not abide by traditional masculinity discourses (Connell 1995). Within the context of lad culture, Eve identified that men that didn't "*fit in*" (overweight or too self-conscious) were negatively affected by lad culture. Eve argued this not fitting in made them "*desperate to be a part of something they can't be*". In this regard, Eve's talk seemed to be marked by an affective tone, where seeing such men was "*hurtful to watch*". The use of these words suggested a personal embarrassment, as their constant trying to be 'one-of-the-lads' made them look desperate and prevented them from being lucky with women. For Eve, these men's desperation to fit in leads to the taking up of a 'laddish masquerade' that concealed their subordinated

masculinity and enabled them to perform a laddish identity. Consequently, Eve believes the men's authentic selves are hidden.

My use of the term 'masquerade' in relation to the lad is a borrowed concept from McRobbie's work on what she coined "the postfeminist masquerade" (2007: 718). McRobbie situates this concept within the current neoliberal social context where women are encouraged and expected to engage in different spheres of social life in ways that are appropriately feminine, for example in working life. This, for McRobbie, entails a re-definition of gender relations and a retrenchment of patriarchal masculinities. In a neoliberal socio-cultural context, McRobbie argues a new sexual contract emerges in order to re-secure masculine hegemony. This new sexual contract is positioned as in opposition to the threat posed by feminism, and involves a "postfeminist gender settlement" (2007: 721) that articulates a specific postfeminist masquerade. McRobbie explains this drawing on Riviere's (1929) psychoanalytic work. Riviere argues women hoping for power might put on a mask of womanliness to thwart the anxiety that may arise among men as a consequence. In this sense, the postfeminist masquerade, McRobbie states, is a form of feminine inscription or an interpellation device. It is not a concealment mask of one's identity, but a complete reconfiguration of it. There is no doer behind the deed, but a re-articulation of the person. It is underpinned by a hyper-feminine socio-cultural frame that re-locates women within traditional gender hierarchies. However, McRobbie (2004) argues, this is concealed under neoliberal discourses of freedom, choice and empowerment.

Consequently, McRobbie (2007) argues women appear to 'choose' this hyper-feminine aesthetics, wearing spindly stilettos and pencil skirts, which become re-signified as an act of choice rather than obligation (723). Women in this new sexual contract make the point that their look is freely chosen, not determined by any external gendered values. McRobbie (2007) states that within the context of the workplace, the postfeminist masquerade works to conceal women's rivalry with men, marking them as a sign (Butler 1990) of sexual desire despite their existence as subjects of language (participating actively in the work life). This re-instatement of women as signs functions to re-assure and uphold male dominance and male structures of power by softening women's presence in the workplace and their potential competitive actions. Hyper-femininity works to deconstruct male fear of women taking authoritative positions, hence re-establishing gender relations in a traditionalistic way. Thus, the postfeminist masquerade works to return to traditional forms of patriarchal subordination, presenting this

shift as empowering and liberating, through a disarticulation of feminist values (McRobbie 2009: 47). Therefore, in order to become 'equal', visible and qualified to work, women are required to participate in consumer culture through the acquisition of a hyper-feminine aesthetics where the trope of authority and power is replaced by fashion and beauty.

Within the context of lad culture, the laddish masquerade operates following a similar narrative. The laddish masquerade functions to re-secure hegemonic masculinity in a socio-cultural context where it is perceived as losing power and authority (i.e. men's rights associations fighting for men's equality with women [Ging 2017]). The men in the laddish masquerade reconfigure themselves as performing a patriarchal lad masculine identity in an attempt to re-establish a gender hierarchy based on the superiority of men over women, and men over other 'inferior' men. I argue it is these 'inferior' men who are most required to participate in the masquerade in order to improve their social status. However, the articulation of these laddish masculinities is presented as a form of individual choice, free of regulatory mechanisms: men freely choose to perform laddishness. This choice is therefore considered as empowering, since it allows men to escalate the masculine hierarchy put in place by hegemonic masculinity. Consequently, the adoption of a laddish masquerade works to maintain that same hierarchy as it poses no real threats to it, in fact, it makes men aspire to work their way to the top to achieve a dominant position. In this way, men's identities become reconfigured through the incessant performing of laddishness, aspiring to become 'one-of-the-lads'.

Despite Eve's identification of the negative effects the laddish performance has over some men, the group furthered recognised adverse consequences lad culture, as a compulsory masculine archetype for men, has on those men that are positioned as the lowest in the masculinity hierarchy; those deemed irrelevant.

Extract 3:

Silvia	And what happens with the guys that don't identify as lads, do you feel -any pressure from lad culture because that's how you should be or in a way… something like that?
Joe	I don't feel pressure really, I am kind of glad I am not a part of them, cos I think it's ridiculous.
Mark	Yeah.
Anne	But, do you get annoyed about the fact that there's a lot of… people might complain about "lads", but they'll just label it as all men?
Rose	Yeah.

Joe	I get more annoyed at the fact that if you're not a lad, the people that are lads consider you to be different, and like irrelevant. So, if you're not a lad you're not-you're not anything-
Eve	You don't fit into their charac-category of masculinity –
Joe	Yeah, if you're not a lad you're not worth acknowledging. That's the part-
Rose	If you don't play that part you're a pussy.
Joe	Yeah…

(Meeting 1, 8th February 2017)

Above, Joe denied feeling any pressures from lad culture to perform a particular form of masculinity. By placing himself as "*irrelevant*", Joe positioned himself outside the masculine hierarchy imposed and reproduced by lad culture. This position allowed him to construct his own masculinity as one with critical distance from lad culture; untouched by the laddish discourses based on traditional articulations of masculinity. In fact, he rendered lad culture as "*ridiculous*", hence disavowing the relative power laddish masculinities exert over men, specifically himself.

However, in his talk, Joe brought further to light the hierarchical power that lad culture reproduces through his annoyance at the complete dismissal lads exert over men who do not perform a laddish masculinity. Not being a lad is equated with being irrelevant and "*not worth acknowledging*", therefore becoming "*nothing*". This becoming nothing also involved a demasculinization turned into the gendered categorisation of being a "*pussy*" by Rose. Fair (2011) argues the misogynistic label of 'pussy' functions as a metaphor for a failed masculinity by associations with feminine passivity. Even though in this talk it was the participants using the word to criticise the working of lad culture, this use of the term to imagine how lads would view a man outside of lad culture suggested a vision of femininity as the other. The denigration of femininity and everything close to it established the working basis of the label 'pussy'. Calling someone a 'pussy' works to situate these men's masculinities on the same level as women, therefore, on an inferior and subordinate category. Consequently, this places the lads' masculinity as superior (Schacht 1996).

Through these extracts, the participants constructed laddish identities as carefully performed through a masculinity that not all young men had access to. While adopting a laddish attitude was presented as virtually available for all men, as a form of laddish masquerade, not having the correct looks ended up sabotaging these efforts, with, ultimately, these men failing in their laddish enactment. In this way, laddishness was established by the group as a performative act,

as a way of enacting a hegemonic masculinity based on reproduction of certain behaviours and the ability to get the precise looks required. Drawing on the participants' responses, lad culture could therefore be understood as a discourse of contemporary masculinity whose lack of universal availability creates a hierarchical relationship among men, differentiating those that can attain the correct laddish persona and those who cannot. The discussions around the figure of the lad and its availability gave cue to a discussion around the spaces that enable these types of laddish behaviour. Who and what enables the lads?

7.2 ENABLING THE LADS

The participants presented the lads as performing a specific hegemonic masculinity, constructed in particular spatial locations: from the University environment to pubs and clubs. This located the reproduction of lad culture more predominately within the context of the student-centred nighttime economy and the laddish atmosphere(s) it assembled. Discussing lad culture as located in particular environments enabled the group to account for the way they inhabited these spaces with the possibility of physical proximity to the lads. This also allowed the group to elaborate on the spatial dynamics shaping lad culture, therefore constructing lad culture as having a spatial quality that created a particular atmosphere for the participants to navigate. I explore this below through the lens of affect theory, specifically through the concept of 'sticky atmospheres' drawing on Ahmed's (2014a[2004], 2004b, 2009; 2010) concept of 'sticky affects' and Ben Anderson's (2009) notion of 'affective atmospheres'.

As explained in Chapter 3, I employ an understanding of affect as shaped by a psychosocial approach. This enables me to engage with affect empirically and identify the intensities that are communicated discursively, hence going beyond methodological issues on how to 'capture' affect (Knusden and Stage 2014, Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b). In this section I expand on the concept of 'sticky atmospheres', introduced previously in detail (see Chapter 6). Drawing on the participants' responses, I provide an understanding of lad culture as mobilising 'sticky atmospheres' in the spaces where it reproduces itself.

7.2.1 STICKY LADDISH ATMOSPHERES

Throughout the meetings, the participants described the nighttime spaces (pubs, clubs, bars) as the specific environments where lad culture was reproduced and visible. Nevertheless, they did

not completely exclude laddish behaviours from the daytime environments, as discussed by the group below:

Extract 4:

Anne	But I think they could use like-like the night time cos it's-people always use the excuse of drink to like kinda like make as an excuse for any kind of behaviour so… it could still be like cheeky in the daytime but excuse me, it's like, oh, if it's night I think it's a bit more exaggerated as I-as you do like if you drank a fair few but yeah I think it's still around predominately cos they still hang around the same groups and a lot of sports just take place in the daytime, so.

[*later in the conversation*]

Silvia	Do you think there's less in the day time or in other ways-
Anne	Well maybe like, yeah it's like less like obvious maybe?-
Joe	I think it's just cos of the different environments-
Anne	-yeah-
Joe	-on the day and night cos there's not club environments during the day, like there isn't. Cos you get the odd group or something with the like shout at girls in the streets and stuff as Gwen said, but uhm… on the night time is like you're like in a mass aren't ya, you're like in a massive group of people and you can disappear like that if you want-
Anne	Yeah
Joe	So… that's why it's so predominant there I think.

(Meeting 2, 16th February 2017)

In the extract above, the group tried to explain what differentiated experiences of lad culture in the day and nighttime. Their sense-making fits cultural ideas on daytime as based on order, with nighttime darkness "allowing potentially transgressive behaviours to occur under a veil of anonymity" (Williams 2008: 518). In this regard, the participants constructed two contrasting atmospheres. The daytime atmosphere was presented as one where lad culture existed, yet in an out-of-place manner. This could be interpreted using Douglas' idea of 'dirt' (1966[2002]). Like dirt for Douglas, the appearance of lad culture during the day is perceived through otherness, therefore categorised as out of its "proper place" (Campkin 2013: 48) of the nighttime scene. In contrast, the nighttime atmosphere appears as the space where laddish behaviours are "*exaggerated*", particularly through alcohol consumption. Regarding this, Joe located the main difference between these day/night time laddish displays on "*club environments*", inasmuch as the nighttime is seen as mobilising laddish behaviours more intensely. In this light, Joe does not locate the distinction in the space itself, but in the "*different environments*" that the contrast between day and night create.

I suggest therefore that in this talk, the atmosphere shapes affect by having a gas-like quality, filling the space (Anderson 2009), whereby the construct of the student-centred nighttime economy becomes one where "*you're like in a mass*", thus providing cover for lad behaviour (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b). The participants understood the atmospheres of the nighttime as excess, similar to the way news media often present societal issues with alcohol (Measham and Brain 2005). To discuss the nighttime was to also talk in terms of how drinking transforms space, where alcohol consumption permitted "*any kind of behaviour*". Joe attributed this to the different environments present in the day/night dichotomy: "*On the day and night cos there's not club environments during the day, like there isn't*". It is therefore club environments that actively generate the atmospheres where lad culture reproduces itself. In this regard, it is the spaces of clubs and the atmospheres generated within to which lad culture sticks (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b). The environment of the club enables laddish behaviours, which in turn, result in the circulation and accumulation of affect, leading to the creation of sticky laddish atmospheres (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b).

The group also positioned the University space as one of the spaces where lad culture stuck. Dempster (2011, 2009) and Jackson, Dempster and Pollard (2015) highlight the University sphere as one where excessive alcohol consumption on night socials is encouraged. Dempster's (2011) study found these behaviours informed the template of masculinity for male students, more specifically "of those seeking to position themselves as 'lads'" (645). The figure of the University as enabling lad culture was also recognised by the participants, however, with some dissent:

Extract 5:

Mark	Lad culture wouldn't exist without University-
Anne	No still would I think it still would. It's definitely Universities are a catalyst for it because there're lads who are-I know lads who don't go to University; they work, they're on apprenticeships, they-or they're in, they're not really working but there're still the notions of alcohol, still the notions of going out and-
Eve	I think it starts at like College or Sixth Form-
Anne	Yeah
Eve	Or stuff like that where at the starts of High School and they get worse but yeah, I think Uni is a big, big part of it but it's not the only reason why it goes on… uhm…

(Meeting 3, 6th March 2017)

In the extract, the participants positioned Universities as catalysts for lad culture, however without limiting its prevalence to specific spheres. In this sense, sticky lad culture was constructed through mobility and circulation. It is not static, it circulates. Sticky atmospheres are therefore generated in the move of intensities: they are "unfinished" and do not belong to any particular object or situation and they are always in the process of becoming, updating and changing (Anderson 2009; Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b). For example, within the context of lad culture, these atmospheres are constantly regenerating themselves and sprouting in different settings – as pointed out by the participants, lad culture is not exclusive to University cultures regardless of how enabling HE institutions might be. As a result, the sticky atmospheres put into motion by the lads cannot be traced to one particular point of origin as their incessant movement between spaces, bodies and events makes them unstable and therefore, always open to change.

7.3 EXPERIENCING LAD CULTURE

Building on the observation that space is important in understanding how the participants made sense of lad culture, below I explore the ways the participants discussed it in relation to their experiences. From microaggressions and everyday sexism to situations of sexual harassment, the group shared multiple stories regarding their encounters with the lads. The concept of 'microaggressions' refers to situations of micro-assaults, microinsults and microinvalidations that are present in the everyday light as a form of subtle discrimination against members of a marginalised group (Sue et al. 2007). The stories shared by the participants contained different degrees of aggression and consequently, were saturated with affect (Ahmed 2014a[2004]). The affective language used by the group to describe their interactions located their experiences in affective atmospheres. As a result, all these accounts shared something at the core: they were sticky, they stuck to the participants' memory, shaping their understanding of lad culture and affecting their subject position as female students navigating the laddish nighttime scene[23].

Through retelling of their stories, the participants constructed themselves as resisting. In their accounts, the participants appeared as talking back to the lads to protect their space and try to

[23] It is pertinent to note a difference identified between male and female accounts of their interactions with lad culture: male participants' discussions did not elaborate on the nighttime settings, rather, they were more focused on the status-based inequalities present and reproduced among different groups of men and how this resulted in some men deemed as 'inferior' due to their subordinate masculinity.

get them away. These responses to lad culture can be contextualised within current postfeminist and neoliberal discourses that position women as self-regulating, rational and empowered. In this context, women are required to be responsible for their life biography and to present all consumption practices as something freely chosen, regardless of how restrained their choices might be (Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody 2001; Gill 2007). In this regard, I argue female participants' 'agentic' reactions to lad culture were underpinned by neoliberal and postfeminist values that posit them as capable and responsible agents (McRobbie 2007; 2009; Gill 2007). These socio-cultural discourses shaped the way women in this group responded to sexist lad culture, therefore also shaping the way they made sense of these encounters and presented themselves when sharing these accounts.

7.3.1 DEFENDING ONESELF

The participants presented themselves as resisting the sexism reproduced by lad culture. These forms of resistance were enacted individually, in contrast to collective strategies, and took place within the nighttime settings and spaces. For example, Eve shared an account of resisting lad culture in the following extract.

Extract 6:

> Eve — Yeah, I've got an experience before-before… a club in my hometown and uhm… me and my friend were out, she got… she was very, very drunk whereas I was like… not as drunk and uhm… there's was like this middle-age guy like… he was like… it was like a 'lad' but middle-aged with all of his friends to the other side and he tried like… he tried to put a hand up my friend's skirt and I was like "no" like "stop" and she was really uncomfortable and then when I told him to stop he started trying to do it to me but I am strong, and I kicked him with my Doc. Martens so… he went away but like… I was just like horrified that it was like, my first night out and it just scarred me like… how… like, cos my friend was so drunk she didn't even know what was going on and he knew that, like he targeted her specifically because he knew she wouldn't do anything to stop him… but…
>
> *(Meeting 1, 8th February 2017)*

In this extract, Eve depicted an instance of sexual assault that occurred to her intoxicated friend on a night out. In her story, Eve presented herself as trying to stop the "*middle-age*" lad's advances, but failed to do so since she recounted how the man responded by turning his aggression towards her. However, Eve recounted further retaliating against him, therefore constructing herself as strong and with agency: "*but I am strong, and I kicked him with my*

Doc. Martens". In describing herself as strong and able to physically fight the man off, she also positioned herself as more agentic than her friend, who in this account, remained largely inactive. It was Eve in this story who was presented as responsible for having stopped the assault. Despite this, she gave an account of also being "*scarred*" and "*horrified*" by this interaction during her first night out and by the man's intentional targeting of her vulnerable friend. With this, Eve highlighted the affectivity shaping both the event and her interpretation of it.

In reacting against misogynistic lad culture, Gwen, a South-Korean student, also shared an abusive laddish interaction she had endured while walking down a busy street at night. What was pertinent about this confrontation is not only the misogynistic underpinnings of the laddish behaviour, but also the racist nature of the entire interchange.

Extract 7:

Gwen	Specially like, like I used to live in [name] Street and it happens all the time when you walk specially with your female friends everyone like, kind of many people would say 'ni hao' and run away and sometimes it- it's actually really offensive-
Everyone	Yeah-
Gwen	So… yeah, so we were trying to find to swear them back and try to be also offensive. We tried many things for example we say-say back like 'bon jour' and they all say like 'I'm not French' and we would say 'I'm not Chinese' and they-
Everyone	[laughs]
Gwen	They're like, they would say like 'who cares you're Asian' and we'd say 'who cares you're European anyway' so-
Everyone	[laughs]

(Meeting 2, 16th February 2017)

In this situation, Gwen recounted how her friends and herself were met with racist jokes by a group of men who said 'ni hao' to them, hence assuming they were Chinese since they were Asian women. The generic 'Chinese' categorization employed by the lads was used as an umbrella term to refer to Asian people in general. In her retelling of this event, Gwen underlined the frequency of this racist interaction, since it "*happens all the time*", and identified it as "*really offensive*". She then stated her and her friends' desire to fight back and be just as "*offensive*". In this encounter, Gwen negotiated her agency by mimicking and inversing the racist remarks. The all-encompassing term for multiple Asian identities as 'Chinese' was reversed to the all-encompassing 'European'. Gwen fought back, conversing the racist rhetoric:

if we're all the same because we're Asian, you're all the same because you're European. In doing this, Gwen turned the racist rhetoric used by the lads in on itself, destabilising momentarily the established racial hierarchies. However, these resistances to lad culture on nights out were not limited to physically or verbally fighting back – sometimes it was enough to not react at all. I turn to this below.

7.3.2 NOT REACTING

Even though almost all the participants showed willingness to resist lad culture, there were certain situations where some of the women described feeling "*too anxious*" or "*too scared*" to articulate themselves. While it is important to highlight the moments in which the participants were able to stand up and react against racist and misogynistic lads, it is equally relevant to bring to light those instances in which they felt they could not. For example, street harassment or catcalling can make women feel afraid to fight back as these events work to remind women of their social vulnerability (Ditto 2007). Organisations like 'Hollaback' work to end street harassment through mapping the spaces where harassment can happen, as a form of callout culture (Keller, Mendes and Ringrose 2018). However, this form of harassment can be felt as paralysing for the women involved, therefore deciding not to confront the harasser. This does not mean, however, a failure in combating misogyny or a lack of agency, as this logic only places the responsibility of its erasure on the people that are the target of laddish abuse. Not responding to lad culture in certain situations highlights the deeply affective forces it can exert over people, particularly women. This affectivity becomes excessive, consequently saturating the space and the encounter through its constant circulation. Rose, for example, shared an experience where the affectivity of it impeded her from defending herself, prompting her to hide away.

Extract 8:

> Rose — It makes me very anxious, I get very anxious about but it- I feel it depends on the company and in some senses the state I'm in and that's not good at all like, I drink to join in to this sort of culture I enjoy drinking and I enjoy going on nights out but if I am not drunk and someone approaches me I don't have the confidence to be like "fuck off get away from me" I'd just sat like… look at Mary's party, I was so scared someone like approached me and it was horrible and I was like went and hid in Mary's room cos I didn't want to be around that sort of culture, I wasn't drunk and it was horrible.
>
> *(Meeting 1, 8th February 2017)*

In this extract, Rose described getting "*very anxious*" in situations where lad culture was present. She marked her drunkenness level as the determinant force in the confidence she felt to get someone away from her. In this regard, confidence was depicted by Rose as the requirement needed to stand up for herself. Confidence was then constructed as a technology of the self (Gill and Orgad 2015; Evans and Riley 2014; Foucault 1988). The concept of 'technologies of the self' was developed by Foucault (1988) and it refers to the historical and culturally specific ways in which subjects constitute themselves by operating on their bodies, thoughts, attitudes and conduct (18). Gill and Orgad (2015) describe 'confidence' as a gendered technology of the self that is presented as the ultimate solution for women to overcome obstacles and achieve happiness (326). They argue this female confidence re-signifies feminist ideas, recasting them through postfeminist and neoliberal individualistic values (327). In doing this, confidence emerges as a way for women to internalise responsibility for social problems and identify "the program required to solve it" (330).

Within the context of Rose's account, having the confidence was linked to the consumption of alcohol, therefore constructing it as the enabling tool for her to fight lad culture. In this situation, Rose presented herself as unable to fight back due to the lack of alcohol in her system. Without alcohol, she recounted getting "*very anxious*", therefore being saturated with affect. She recounted being at her friend's party and hiding in one of the rooms as a result of the possibility of having someone approach her. In this story, drawing on both Gill and Orgad (2015) and Banet-Weiser (2015), if confidence appears as something that requires constant work, in this case, it also required alcohol. Rose described her experiences at the party by saying "*I wasn't drunk and it was horrible*", thus, attributing her anxiety to the lack of alcohol consumed rather than the lads' behaviour. Rose depicted alcohol as the main coping mechanism to fit into the culture and also considered it the enabler of her assertiveness and confidence in situations that involved encountering the lads. Consequently, Rose's depiction of the party brings to light how negatively she experienced the situation, describing feeling "*scared*" and "*anxious*". In doing so, Rose highlighted the affective dimensions of this particular situation and identified the symbiotic relationship between alcohol consumption and confidence to manage this event in getting the lads to stay away from her.

Eve provided a further account of being saturated with affect because of lad culture by sharing a personal story of abuse she endured at the hands of her laddish housemate. During her first year of University, Eve moved into a house with three housemates, with one of whom she

established a romantic relationship that, despite recounted as having an ideal beginning, resulted in abuse.

Extract 9:

Eve	I lived in a house with a guy that was really-really predatory, and like I'd say that he took advantage of me when I was vulnerable so like, I was even messaging the estate agents like 'don't let girls live here, don't let girls be in a house with him because he knows what he's doing, he knows how to target girls to make them feel special'… make them feel like you know when they're lonely and they've just come to Uni like I didn't know anyone. I went into Uni knowing him and the two other housemates that I was living with and then he just like, he was insane like he-he was a natural psycho… but he made me feel, you know like, he had a girlfriend at the time as well, but he made me just feel like wanted and less alone in this big scary University world… so… but like after that he broke up with his girlfriend and he just went psycho like… keep this confidential okay?-
Silvia	Yeah-
Eve	[laughs] –but I had to get the police involved to get me out of the house because like, he wou-and… you know what he was like, he was a lad-
Joe	Yeah proper-
Eve	And no doubt about it like even when he had a girlfriend he was the kind of person that would be there in the clubs scouting for girls to talk to and… he was very, very manipulative. He was like insane, because I think, a lot of people thought that it was like my fault, I shouldn't have slept with him and all this but you don't understand what is like to be in that position.

(Meeting 2, 16th February 2017)

Eve depicted the man she got involved with as extremely manipulative and preying on vulnerable girls. She gave a pathologising account of him, describing him as a "*natural psycho*" and "*insane*". In pointing to his possible mental instability (as "*psycho*" and "*insane*"), I argue she pathologised and normalised his "*predatory*" attitudes: he was so calculating and controlling because he was just crazy. In doing this, she failed to link this man's behaviour to wider structures of masculinity that feed the reproduction of hegemonic forms of masculinity based on anger and predation. Haider (2016) explores the relationship between patriarchal heteronormative societies and male rage. In this work, Haider (2016) argues violence is the mode of asserting masculinity, and therefore an integral part of 'doing' masculinity. Providing the inextricable relationship between violence and masculine identity, Haider (2016) states that when masculinity is challenged in society, this creates a disillusionment among men, which results in masculinity turning toxic. Haider (2016) then establishes a direct relationship between homophobia, something seen as challenging heteronormative masculinity, male

aggression, and the mass-shooting of an Orlando LGBT club. The threat of non-violent masculinities is met with an outpour of male rage as a will to destroy. Haider concludes: "Toxic masculinities produce "nothing," say nothing, mean nothing; they are products ultimately of the violence that is constitutive of masculinity in patriarchal cultures" (561). In this regard, Ging (2017) explores how online male communities such as incels use violent rhetoric (e.g rape memes and rape videos) to vent their antifeminist toxic anger. Within the context of Eve's account, her constant pathologising of the man as a "*psycho*" could be better framed under the paradigm of the male rage and anger developed by Haider and Ging as an integral part of toxic masculinity.

Beyond this, Eve also described the perception people had of her. She spoke of people seeing her as guilty for her situation within the relationship, therefore bringing to light the common victim-blaming attitudes and judgements that society tends to reproduce within the context of abusive relationships (Hackman et al. 2017). It is also worth mentioning her sentence addressed to me "*keep this confidential, okay?*", as this shows a possible sense of fear or/and reprisal if this story is not kept secret. Later in the same conversation, she continued her story, expressing the concern she felt regarding the potentiality of other women going through the same experience.

Extract 10:

> Eve — Yeah and that's what concerned me most cos I didn't want a girl like me going into that same house and have the same experience as me and then, you know, having… like I've got trauma from it like, been diagnosed with PTSD from the stuff he did and… it's just a terrible position to be in like, even now I'm scared to go out… I haven't been out since I started Uni cos I was just scared that I'd see him in the club cos he goes out pretty much Tuesday and Friday.
>
> *(Meeting 2, 16th February 2017)*

Above, Eve gave an account of still suffering from the aftermath of the relationship, saying she was still "*too scared to go out*", therefore highlighting the prolonged stickiness this event had in Eve's life. Eve also brought to the forefront how her social life was shaped by this sticky experience, explaining she had not been out since the beginning of the University year to avoid the possibility of seeing him ("*I haven't been out since I started Uni cos I was just scared that I'd see him in the club*").

Thus, Eve highlighted the consequences this abusive relationship had on her. She declared having trauma from this experience and being diagnosed with PTSD. In this regard, Jenney and Exner-Cortens (2018) argue that the reproduction of toxic masculinity can have negative effects on the female psyche, resulting in the erosion of women's mental well-being. The authors understand the concept of toxic masculinity as the most extreme form of hyper-masculinity, characterised by the subjugation of men and women. This closely relates to Eve's accounting of developing PTSD as a consequence of the abuse she endured. It also points to the current rising of mental health related illnesses among University students in the context of toxic masculinities (Raddi 2019; Weale 2019; Busby 2019a).

These intensely affective experiences with the lads were multiple and were met with a variety of responses from the group: from direct one-on-one challenges presented as articulations of resistance to non-reaction due to the saturation of affect and feeling "*too anxious*" or "*too scared*". However, the participants also recounted their own strategies to 'keep the lads away' without engaging in a direct confrontation. Through strategizing the night, some participants were able to avoid unwanted laddish interactions.

7.4 NAVIGATING THE NIGHT ATMOSPHERE

The presence of women in the nighttime economy has been historically underpinned by discourses around pathology and addiction (Sheard 2011). It is only until recently that women's participation in nighttime spaces has been encouraged by marketing campaigns to incorporate women into their address (Mackiewicz 2015). This is due to shifts in the workforce brought by the gendered process of deindustrialisation that included the entrance of women into the public sphere, followed by their entry within the nighttime economy (Mackiewicz 2015). However, this recent entrance of women and the general expansion of the nighttime economy have not been free of obstacles – for men or women.

In his research, Kavanaugh (2015) argues the capitalistic nighttime leisure scene is marked by the reproduction of masculine violence. He states the night environment constricts individual behaviour to market compliance, therefore giving rise to specific types of violence which reproduce gender inequality. He claims aggressive masculinity results in violence in nighttime social events and intersects with the values of global capitalism, as "persons driving the explorations of new capital markets also construct themselves as virile, powerful and

domineering" (241). Consequently, nighttime economies become a melting pot for masculine violence, which is used to assert men's mastery of the night by engaging in structural, relational and consumption practices: sexual activity, alcohol consumption and illicit drug use. Sheard (2011) has also explored the presence of male violence within this context. According to Sheard, the inclusion of women into the nighttime economy has been structured by their sexual availability and vulnerability to male harassment. As a result, women participating in night socials have to develop strategies that help ensure their safety in unfriendly environments. The presence of this hostile environment for women points to the existence of sticky atmospheres generated as a consequence of the constant movement of affect between the lads, the space and the women. In this light, the strategies that Sheard identifies in her participants' accounts are elaborated as a way to manage the sticky atmospheres that shape their nighttime experiences.

In this part of the chapter, I explore the participants' accounts of navigating the nighttime spaces and atmospheres (clubs, pubs, etc.). The group gave a diverse recounting of experiences while navigating these spaces and shared their strategies for dealing with the lads and their unwanted attention safely. However, these stories were sometimes constructed through contradictions. The participants gave conflicting accounts over the reasons underpinning the reproduction of lad culture in which the responsibility for their actions seemed not to be entirely on them.

7.4.1 STRATEGIZING THE NIGHT AS RESPONSIBLE WOMEN

In her study, Sheard explores the strategies developed by women navigating the nighttime economy to preserve their safety in potentially hostile environments (2011). A particular way the women in the study ensured their safety was through the safeguarding of their drinks to protect themselves against drink spiking (627). Within the context of this research, the female participants[24] shared their own strategies they put into motion to ensure their safety, avoid laddish encounters and flee from unsolicited male advances.

Through the elaborations of the strategies, the participants positioned themselves as connoisseurs of the inner workings of the nighttime spaces and the power dynamics present within. In doing this, the participants emerged as experts of the nighttime economy, and also of the lads' own strategies. This is reflected in Mary's account below:

[24] Only the female participants gave account of their experiences in nighttime spaces.

Extract 11:

Mary — I kinda felt like that but I think being at Uni I've sort of worked out what works to get people to stay away from me so I'll give a guy a really dirty look and he'd instantly know to walk away or if he gets too close to me I'll kinda like-this sounds really bad like, I'll kind of punt him in the back and he'll just move away there's this thing where I'll stick my knuckle up and just dig it into his back and he just moves but or like I'll step on his foot and like do-deliberately, like and that would usually get them away.

(Meeting 2, 16th February 2017)

In this extract, Mary constructed herself as in control of the nighttime space, and therefore knowledgeable. It was as a result of being at university that she knew this space and the necessity for the creation of strategies to "*get people to stay away from me*". In exploring these strategies, it is not my intention to develop an account of young women as problematic in distinguishing tactics for avoiding or fleeing from the men they identified as predatory. On the contrary, I argue that in strategizing the possibility of encountering lads, Mary was managing her actions and behaviours in a space (e.g. club) that was meant to be about enjoyment and pleasure (Sheard 2011).

Despite the presentation of these strategies to manage the nighttime spaces and their atmospheres, the participants also accounted for some situations where they lacked these tactics and found themselves in need of external help. This external help was given, as retold by the group, in the form of confidence as a way to enable (and responsibilise) the women to avoid unwanted encounters with lad culture. Responsibility and victim-blaming discourses are normally attributed and placed on women (Phipps, Ringrose, Renold and Jackson 2018). In this way, women are constructed as responsible for their fate, from sexual harassment to assault, including rape (Suarez and Gadalla 2010). Stringer (2014) links this discourse of female 'personal responsibility' to neoliberal thought, as the ideal neoliberal subject always avoids the 'victim mentality', and assumes accountability for their actions and consequences. Stringer (2014) argues this logic produces a 'neoliberal victim' (7), which gives cue to the final responsibilization of women over the violence they face. Stringer (2014) explains this is possible through the turning of women's social vulnerability into personal responsibility, thus depoliticising and removing misogyny and patriarchy from understanding violence against women (9). The neoliberalisation of women's experiences is also underpinned by postfeminist discourses where women are presented as empowered, agentic and responsible (Tasker and

Negra 2007). Within this context, discourses around female confidence emerge as a way of constructing women as empowered and in control of themselves, while simultaneously, enabling the internalisation of the responsibility for their own safety and well being (Banet-Weiser 2015; Gill and Orgad 2015).

The participants' talk followed the confidence narrative as the needed tool to successfully get the lads away from them. When discussing the source of anxiety for women during nights out, Anne gave her personal account where she attributed it to women's lack of confidence.

Extract 12:

> Anne […] I think on-on one of my nights out with Mary even though we bonded the fact that we got off from boys at the same time he'd said "come back to mine" so kinda initiating this idea of sex, this was at a time once again, I was still kind of freshy to the idea of sex and relationships and it was not something I wanted. I was okay with kissing guys so, but he just wouldn't stop and I even said to him "do you even remember my name?" and he didn't, he didn't remember my name but he still wanted sex, so I walked around Keap, he was still following me and then the only person that I could find was the lady in the bathroom. All the girls were like round me like "you can do this" but they weren't-weren't there when I left, it was only the looky-looky lady[25] who was like I-like gave me the confidence just to walk and then tell him "no" and then walk home by myself. I was fine walking back home by myself but it was just getting away from that sort of character. Once again I think girls need to be given more confidence on a night out that the lads at the end of the day they're just boys; if they have big arms it's maybe because they're on protein shakes or steroids.
>
> *(Meeting 1, 8th February 2017)*

In the extract, Anne identified women's lack of confidence as the main cause for fear during nights out, even when the situation could potentially involve physical aggression ("*I can't say no they're gonna hit me*"). Anne claimed the necessity for women to have confidence to stand their ground and be able to flee from unwanted male advances. She presented this confidence as not only stemming from one's own self, but as a discourse that gets worked and projected through groups of women. In Anne's story, it was the women and female staff in the bathroom that gave her the confidence "*to just walk and then tell him 'no'*". This resonates with Rose's account in extract 8, where she attributed the anxiety she felt to her lack of confidence to stand

[25] Reference to the women staff members that work in club bathrooms selling cosmetic products and perfumes.

up for herself, and not the lads' problematic behaviour. In doing this, both Rose and Anne adopted the sense-making of a postfeminist sensibility regarding male harassment in drinking cultures, which involved dismissing male dominance and misogynistic behaviours through a re-working of the responsible female self to seek empowerment in confidence (McRobbie 2015; Favaro 2017). This was visible in Anne's description of the lads as "*just boys*", which overlooked the predatory attitudes displayed by men in their stories (e.g. men following them around the club, insisting on having sex). As a result, Anne placed the responsibility of safety on women themselves. Consequently, the structural male violence is brushed off and seen as something to be overcome through women's articulation of self-confidence and self-regulation (Gill and Orgad 2015; Gill and Elias 2014).

From strategizing their actions during nights out, to carrying out self-work on their confidence, the participants presented the tactics they employed to ensure their safety and protection within the potential threatening context of lad culture. In doing this, the group described their negotiations of the affective atmosphere of the nighttime scene and the considerations they took up when navigating these spaces. From these particular accounts of negotiating the lads within the nighttime economy, the participants also contemplated the wider frame of what they understood as lad culture, providing their own opinions and approaches to tackle it within the context of Higher Education.

7.5 STOPPING LAD CULTURE

As part of the last meeting with this group, I asked the participants to provide strategies that could be developed to expunge lad culture from University and student-centred nighttime spaces. It is worth mentioning how, despite being members of a University society for gender equality, none of the participants saw their group itself as being able to contribute to the erasure of lad culture from University. This sits in opposition with Lewis, Marine and Kenney's (2018) findings on University students using their feminist networks to fight lad culture off campuses. This group's take on tackling lad culture was based on the development of pre-emptive strategies. Eve followed the education route, placing specific emphasis on teaching in consent.

Extract 13:

Eve	Well, I got the same thing like start teaching them early because like at school I don't remember any type of education where like- all the women were put in a room and yeah we were taught how to put condoms

> on but we weren't taught like, your body is yours, you have a right to say 'no' and all the stuff like that. Which I think is-was a big deal because when I got into my first relationship at 15, I didn't succumb to the pressure, but I did feel pressured into having sex cos no one ever really taught me anything like that. And-and I wrote about teaching men that women should be respected and alcohol and club-like environments are not an excuse to prey on women, and-and I think it'd be cool to kinda educate men on eh, or boys about body language, because like so many guys just don't understand when you're-when you're not interested, like if you dance with-like if a guy is dancing with a girl and they're like turning their head, they keep doing it, and I just think maybe like some guys are literally too stupid to know when a girl isn't interested. So it would be good to have body language ehm… lessons I guess. And, yeah just teach them that women have a right to say 'no' to anything or change their mind.
>
> *(Meeting 3, 6th March 2017)*

In Eve's talk, and similarly to the group discussed in Chapter 5, she placed the responsibility for tackling laddish attitudes on pedagogies around sex education. She described having had workshops focused on the use of condoms but condemned the lack of information on consent, women's bodies and rights. This directly points to broader conversations on sexual and relationships education (SRE) which has been criticised for reinforcing heteronormative stereotypical values, and for focusing on women's responsibility to defend themselves rather than teaching young boys about consent and sexism (Glosswitch 2015; McNeill 2013). In the extract, Eve connected this gap within the sex education she received to the pressure she felt to have sex in her first relationship. Even though she claimed to not have succumbed to it, she emphasised she did feel pressure to do it and attributed this to the lack of knowledge of consent ("*no one ever really taught me anything like that*"). (For a paradigm of consent in sexual relationships that is well regarded by sex educationists, see Martin [2014]).

Eve's experience highlights the consequences of a limited and male-oriented sex education that has overlooked people's different sexual development and rights. In proposing a solution to male sexual harassment within clubs, Eve suggested implementing workshops on body language for men, as for her, "*some guys are literally too stupid to know when a girl isn't interested*". In her talk, Eve constructed men as unknowing and in need of education regarding non-verbal consent. But despite articulating the need for this type of education among young boys and men, Eve failed to identify the misogynistic values underpinning male predatory behaviour. Eve's proposition about non-verbal consent might fall short of addressing the underlying issues that shape male violence against women during nights out. Eve finished her

suggestions on how to tackle lad culture by emphasising the importance of teaching "*that women have a right to say 'no' to anything or change their mind*". Despite the empowering message behind the 'right to say no' idea (Barrie 2015), Eve's talk ends up placing the final responsibility for safety on women themselves and offers a rather over-simplistic approach to dealing with sexual harassment and aggression.

Another suggestion to eradicate misogynistic lad culture from University campuses was shared by Anne, who advocated for opening up a conversation about the problematics of these behaviours among the people she felt had been most negatively affected by it.

Extract 14:

> Anne — Ehm, I went kind of more down the empowerment kinda route I said maybe like set up discussions like these ones or a full room by those who feel negatively affected by lad culture whether it's like male or female or those who don't assign themselves to any particular gender, can like, come together and talk it, ehm, any notion or stories they've had like we've had here just so they can like maybe start… finding people they can relate to on it. Cos I think it's quite-it can be quite a sensitive subject, so to-eh, for them to have like a safe space to make friends or like, acquaintances and then maybe set up like societies do like nights out or nights in where, once again those who feel negatively affected by lad culture can go out in more of a safe space with a group of people. […]
>
> *(Meeting 3, 6th March 2017)*

Anne positioned herself in the "*empowerment route*", however, her articulation of this empowerment results in – once again – placing the responsibility of safety and self-preservation on those affected by lad culture. Anne's narrative sat closely with postfeminist discourses that construct women through notions of girl power and female empowerment (Tasker and Negra 2007; McRobbie 2009; Gill 2006). Through this empowerment, Anne suggested creating safe spaces for people to share their experiences with lad culture. The idea of "*safe space*" that Anne brought is part of a larger discussion in feminist circles. Lewis et al. (2015) characterise safe spaces as formed by women wishing to be *safe from* harassment and *safe to* engage more meaningfully than in other spaces. In Anne's talk, this safe space represents just this: a space for women and LGBTQIA+ people where they could safely talk about their interactions and feelings regarding lad culture.

In contemporary discussions, some have seen the introduction of safe spaces, as linked to what they perceive to be an over-sensitive 'snowflake' generation (Inge 2018). In this view, safe spaces are thought to be the creation of self-victimised and immature students who refuse to engage with different opinions (Lock 2016). However, within the context of HE, Ahmed (2015) explores the figure of the over-sensitive student as someone stopping things from happening due to their hurt feelings. Ahmed (2015) argues safe spaces are indeed a technique "for dealing with the consequences of histories that are not over", therefore enabling conversations about difficult issues that continue to happen. In Anne's view, starting these conversations about lad culture are crucial for raising awareness on the issue and to create a bond between the people involved in the talk: "*for them to have like a safe space to make friends or like, acquaintances*".

While challenging the view that the safe space is a form of self-victimisation, however, I would also like to highlight the confessional nature of Anne's advocacy for safe spaces. The Foucauldian confession discourse refers to the belief that through revealing our insides (thoughts, opinions, worries) we become free, while giving ourselves up to governmental forms of power (Foucault 1978). Anne's model of safe space is constructed upon the notion of membership through confession on the negative effects of lad culture. This confessing membership could, however, create further complications regarding the formation of the group's authority to incorporate members and the criteria used to make such decisions. Through Anne's account, lad culture is constructed as a problem that the people affected by it are meant to fix or deal with. Through this confession, I would argue, Anne does not place any accountability for the problematic of laddish behaviours on the lads themselves or the structures that enable this culture to continue reproducing.

7.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have explored the discursive-affective dimensions of lad culture accounted by the members of a Gender Equality group in three ways. In the first subsection of the chapter I have argued that the students' knowing subject position enabled them to establish a separation between those considered to be successful lads to those deemed 'unsuccessful' on the basis of their appearance and try-hard attitudes. However, this distinction was complicated. I explored this entanglement through the concept of the 'laddish masquerade'. Like McRobbie's postfeminist masquerade (2009), I argue the laddish masquerade is a masculinity template that works to re-secure masculine power in a social context where masculinity is seen to be

decreasing in authority. The laddish masquerade builds on Connell's hegemonic masculinity (1995) to establish a hierarchy of men over women and over 'inferior' men. It is these inferior men that. I argue, are required to participate in the laddish masquerade to raise their social status. This possibility of improving one's ranking within the hierarchy is presented within the masquerade as empowering and as a result of individual choice. As a consequence, I concluded the adoption of the laddish masquerade functions to secure the hierarchy as there is no real threat posed to the masculine ideals it promotes. The concept of the laddish masquerade was useful to unpack the entanglement the participants were involved in when attempting to differentiate the alleged *successful* lads from the *unsuccessful* and irrelevant men.

Second, I explored the participants' encounters with lad culture expanding on the notion of sticky atmospheres. I defined sticky atmospheres as sites where mobilisation of affect occurs and becomes sticky. This circulation of affect between bodies and spaces generates the effects of an atmosphere, which doesn't belong to any particular object but is generated through multiple relations (Anderson 2009). This concept is useful to explore lad culture as it allows it to be understood through its spatial, affective and sticky dimensions. I have explored the particular spaces of the nighttime economy and the University as an institution as two of the main sites where lad culture's affectivity gets mobilised and sticks. In doing this, I have been able to comprehend the wider socio-cultural atmospheres of misogyny that shape laddish-sticky spaces at University campuses, bars, pubs and clubs.

Third, in the final section of the chapter I have investigated the participants' articulations of the postfeminist notions of female confidence and empowerment through their engagement in the sticky nighttime spaces and their development of strategies to fight lad culture off. The participants described their interactions with the lads as sometimes depending on the degree of confidence they had. For example, one woman attributed being able to stop the unwanted male advances she was suffering in a club to having the confidence to say 'no'. I have linked this rationalization to Gill and Orgad's (2015) analysis of female confidence as a gendered technology of the self, rooted in postfeminist and neoliberal values.

In the next chapter, I again cut into the text to introduce a theoretical contribution. There were moments across all data sets where participants made moves towards identifying moments where they had taken part or been complicit with lad culture. In what follows, I suggest that this element of the participants' talk needs further elaboration, and therefore introduce the

concept of ‘laddish mis/recognition’ to account for these moments where, despite their distance, the participants recognised themselves as taking part in practices, behaviours and events that fell within their concepts of lad culture.

Chapter 8: Cutting in: Laddish Mis/recognition

"*To the question of "Who created this pattern, you or I?," the paradoxical answer is "Both and neither.*"
(Benjamin 2004: 18)

"*To be denied recognition—or to be 'misrecognized'—is to suffer both a distortion of one's relation to one's self and an injury to one's identity."*
(Fraser 2000: 107)

These quotes, despite being underpinned by different theoretical frameworks (Benjamin's psychoanalytic theories and Fraser's Marxist-informed perspective), both are preoccupied with the same overarching question: the recognition of a subject in society. More crucially, the extracts are concerned with how the process of recognition, the pattern between you and I, or the approach to it, unfolds. In this cut in the thesis, I am looking at the process of mis/recognition among the participants within the context of lad culture. To do this, I draw on my previous work on developing a methodology of misrecognition to explore the entanglements of researcher intimacy in an online mapping of lad culture (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019a). In this chapter, I am also drawing on Benjamin's (2004; 2007) psychoanalytic position and Fraser's (1997; 1998; 2000) Marxist political science-oriented viewpoint in order to explore what I am calling a 'laddish mis/recognition'. In doing this, I develop a psychosocial approach that pays attention to how psychic, cultural and institutional mechanisms shape the formation of subjectivity and its mis/recognition by others within the context of lad culture (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019a). With this, I explore the particular process of mis/recognition that marks a "body's belonging to a world of encounters" (Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 2).

8.1 RECOGNITION: THIRDNESS AND SUBJECTIVITY

Benjamin's take on the concept of recognition is intrinsically connected to her ideas on thirdness and intersubjectivity. For Benjamin (2004; 2007), intersubjectivity is a form of relatedness: it refers to a mutual recognition, a relationship in which "each person experiences the other as a 'like subject,' another mind who can be 'felt with'". (2004: 5). However, this "like subject" needs to be recognised as being apart, distinct, inasmuch as they have a "separate center of feeling and perception" (5). In other words, to experience recognition entails an

acknowledgement of others as similar though separate from the self, as well as feeling that in return. Benjamin (2004) does not align her theorisation of intersubjectivity to other conceptualisations of the concept that understand it as the interaction of distinct experiences. Rather, she aims to understand the process by which we sense and identify others. In doing so, Benjamin positions the idea of 'intersubjective recognition' in opposition to the dyadic relation of doer/done.

The doer/done relation refers to a 'one-way street' interaction where one person feels they are the doer, and the other feels they are done to. Benjamin (2004) explains that this creates the dichotomy between both interlocutors, as one person is (or feels like) the subject, and the other is (or feels like) an object. She calls this a relationship of "complementary twoness" (9), an impasse that generates conflict and coercive dependency on one another. For example, Benjamin (2004) illustrates this through the figures of the analyst and the patient. A patient, Rob, tells his analyst he is having an affair with a woman. His wife knows about the issue and has forbidden him to contact said woman while they consider their marriage. He feels coerced and confesses to be having suicidal thoughts to the analyst, who is about to go on vacation. Within a doer/done relation, Benjamin argues the analyst is faced with a divisive problem between her own needs and those of the patient. If the analyst leaves, she will assume the position of doer, leaving the patient at his own peril; and the patient will feel done to, hurt by the analyst leaving. In wanting to help the patient, she will feel coerced by his dependency on her. Separation, in this case, might mean the indirect murder of the patient, as he could commit suicide. However, staying, might entail the symbolic murder of the analyst, as she would not have allowed herself to have a life that is independent from the patient. Both are thus entrapped in a dyadic twoness relation.

Escaping this dyadism is difficult, but Benjamin (2004; 2007) argues it can be done from the position of thirdness, particularly through what she calls 'the third in the one'. To explore this, Benjamin (2004; 2007) examines the process of creating thirdness, describing this as a relational system that is built alongside the intersubjective skills for co-creation. She defines thirdness as an intersubjective mental state that opens the door to recognition through surrender. In thirdness, she argues, we don't hold onto the third, rather, we surrender to it. In this sense, Benjamin differentiates third as that to which we surrender and thirdness as the frame of mind and aftermath of said surrender. This surrender involves letting go of the self, free from coercion, to let in someone else's viewpoint or reality. Surrender is not, hence, *to*

someone, but is the letting go of one self to *be with* someone else. Consequently, Benjamin (2004) argues, surrender leads to recognition. However, elsewhere (2007) she points to the mutability of this process, as she argues it is the other's recognition that opens up the space of thirdness and therefore, enables surrender. Bearing this in mind, recognition appears as a heavily entangled process where there are not first and second steps, rather, there is a simultaneity of sub-processes: intersubjectivity, thirdness and surrender lead to recognition as much as recognition leads to intersubjectivity, thirdness and surrender. What would this process be like for the analyst and the patient trapped in a relationship absent from recognition? Benjamin explains the analyst must accept the guilt she feels for leaving on holidays and identify a way to discern the empathy she feels for the patient's fear of being abandoned and his demand of submission to him, as he must accept his guilt for his affair. In talking openly with him about both having to bear their correspondent guilt, the twoness relation dissipates and allows for mutual recognition.

Despite the importance placed on speech in this particular example, Benjamin (2007: 6) argues, "the notion of speech misses the first part of the conversation", meaning, "the nonverbal experience of sharing a pattern, a dance, with another person" (2004: 16). The third that emerges in this relationship of oneness is therefore pre-symbolic, and requires the capacity for mutual accommodation, what Benjamin calls 'the one in the third' (16). Benjamin differentiates accommodation from imitation, inasmuch as the former demands both parts to follow and surrender to the same pattern in order to co-create the third. The intersubjective co-created third is therefore enabled through accommodation, and brings together the two experiences of thirdness: one in the third, and third in the one (17). As a result of this integration, a shared moral third is constructed, underscored by surrender and accommodation. To illustrate this, Benjamin (2004) draws on Mitchell's (1993) story of his accommodation to her daughter's different patterns when going for a walk. In this example, Mitchell (1993) suggests that surrendering to his daughter's rhythm generates a moral thirdness that opens up the possibility for recognition.

Notwithstanding of the different recognition processes Benjamin identifies, she also argues recognition does not last. In fact, she claims it constantly breaks down as thirdness caves-in twoness and the intersubjective is lost. Repairing this entails its acceptance, acknowledging our own struggles, loses and responsibilities. In accepting these impasses, Benjamin (2004) suggests, we create a new thirdness that is capable of bearing shame and pain. In doing this,

we find a way to also accept our own vulnerability and failures. However, Benjamin (2004: 29) states: “becoming part of the problem is how we become part of the solution”. Benjamin’s psychoanalytic take on recognition allows me to understand the relational psychic processes that take place among people and to identify what is necessary in order to achieve recognition. However, what is missing from Benjamin is the wider social structures that distinguish power differentials among and between subjects. For this, I turn to Fraser.

8.2 MIS/RECOGNITION AND DISTRIBUTION

In contrast to Benjamin, Fraser (1997; 1998; 2000) analyses the concept of ‘recognition’ from a political-social-economic perspective. Fraser (2000: 109) defines recognition drawing on the Hegelian conception of ‘identity’ as constructed dialogically in a “reciprocal relation between subjects, in which each sees the other both as its equal and also as separate from it”. Through this relation, subjectivity and the construction of the self are formed as we both recognise and are recognised by others. Consequently, the opposite, to be rejected recognition, involves a distortion of one’s relation to the self and one’s identity. Within a society, a group that is depreciated by the dominant culture is misrecognised. In this sense, the objective of the politics of recognition is to amend this self-distortion by challenging the dominant culture’s portrayal of the group.

In her work, Fraser (1998) engages in a critical reading of recognition and its politics and struggles as taking place in what she refers to a ‘post-socialist society’ (68). In this post-socialist society, Fraser (1998) argues struggles for recognition are increasingly supplanting exploitation as the primary underlying social injustice. In this regard, cultural recognition results in displacing socioeconomic distribution as the ultimate solution for social inequality. Fraser contextualises this as occurring within a time of ‘exacerbated material inequality’ (1998: 68), which for her, underscores the move from redistribution (i.e. Marxist) to recognition (i.e. identity model) because of and despite of aggressive and accelerated economic globalization (2000). In criticising the undermining of politics of redistribution in favour of identity-based recognition, Fraser does not propose the inverse. In fact, Fraser (1997; 1998; 2000) elaborates her position paying attention to how both mis/recognition and redistribution practices are mutually imbricated to produce institutionalised patterns of injustice. Failing to see this mutuality results in the stagnation in a redistribution-recognition dilemma that will lead to a partial reading of inequality (1998).

In exploring the redistribution-recognition dilemma, Fraser (1998) identifies two different understandings of injustice. One is socioeconomic injustice (i.e. exploitation), and the other, cultural or symbolic injustice (i.e. representation, interpretation). As stated earlier, Fraser believed in the interlacing of redistribution and recognition in shaping social inequality. However, she recognises how these two processes, despite their intertwinement, can be opposite to each other. She argues, redistribution and recognition appear to have conflicting objectives regarding their take on solving injustice and also, injustice itself. For the 'recognition' group, as Fraser refers to those concerned with cultural injustice, the main problem lies at the heart of cultural misrecognition. Being misinterpreted or devalued because of one's identity is seen as the origin of injustice from which economic inequalities derive. The solution would therefore encompass a revaluing of unrecognised identities, valorising cultural diversity and promoting group differentiation. Conversely for the 'redistribution' group, those concerned with socioeconomic injustice, Fraser (1998) explains the core problem of injustice is class exploitation, from which social differentiation is rooted, inasmuch as, in capitalist societies, the proletariat is overworked and only shares a fraction of the rewards of their work. The solution would involve, then, the restructuring of the political economy and, in a more radical Marxist line of thought, a complete abolishment of class structure. This would hence entail a total erasing of group/class differences among people. In this regard, while recognition strives for a valorising of differences, redistribution aims to cancel them.

Despite acknowledging the importance of the politics of recognition in understanding cultural injustices, Fraser (2000) remains critical of the fixed identity model of inequality that it puts in place. She identifies two problems: a problem of displacement of redistribution and socioeconomic struggles, and a problem of reification of identities. Fraser (2000) argues, the problem of displacement involves adopting a culturalist theory of society that does not see injustices as socially grounded and, therefore, fails to see how misrecognition is not only abstract and discourse-shaped, but also institutionalised and intertwined with distribution inequalities. For Fraser (2000) this supposes a collapse of the politics of recognition on identity politics, resulting thus in a displacement of the politics of redistribution. Following this, Fraser (2000) claims the identity politics paradigm of recognition can work to reify identity, insofar as the need to perform an authentic group identity can simplify this collective identity and deny intra-group differences and the multiplicity of identifications within the group. In this regard, Fraser argues identities can become reified as individuals might feel pressure to conform to a

particular and almost pre-defined group culture. It is because of this that Fraser claims the identity model of recognition can lead to misrecognition. The reification of group identity, she argues, may obscure "the politics of cultural identification" (2000: 112), as well as the authority struggles within the group and the power to represent them.

In attempting to overcome the problems intrinsic to the identity politics model of recognition, as well as trying to find a way to attend to both recognition and redistribution concerns, Fraser suggests a status model. Within the framework of the status model, recognition ceases to be a question of identity to become one of status. In this sense, what would need recognition is not a particular collective identity, but rather, the status of a group or an individual "as full partners in social interaction" (2000: 113). For Fraser, the status model does not reduce the politics of recognition to identity politics, as it aims to overcome subordination by integrating misrecognised people in society as full members. However, what does it mean to redefine recognition through a question of status? Fraser argues that seeing recognition as a problem of status entails exploring "the institutionalized patterns of cultural value" (113) and the ways they shape the condition of the people, both culturally and materially. In this perspective, therefore, when those patterns establish social actors as active participants in society, there is mutual recognition. However, when the actors are deemed inferior and are excluded from any participation, there is status-based subordination and therefore, misrecognition. In providing a definition for misrecognition, Fraser argues:

> "*to be misrecognised, accordingly, is not simply to be thought ill of, looked down upon or devalued in others' attitudes, beliefs or representations. It is rather to be denied the status of a full partner in social interaction, as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute one as comparatively unworthy of respect or esteem.*" (2000: 113)

Fraser conceptualises misrecognition as a form of social subordination that, carried out through work of institutions, manages social interactions in compromise with equality-obstructing cultural norms. As an example, Fraser describes marriage laws as an institution that works to delegitimize same-sex partners, denying them recognition and, therefore, full participation in social life. In this light, institutions regulating cultural value end up creating certain social actor groups as normative (i.e. heterosexuality), while others are constituted as subordinate. It is for this reason that Fraser (2000) argues the status model is adequate to address this specific form

of injustice insofar as it does not attempt to revive the value of any particular identity, but to overcome subordination and seek recognition through re-establishing misrecognised groups as full partners in society.

In bringing the different takes on mis/recognition by both Benjamin and Fraser, I pay attention to the varied institutional, psychic and cultural fabrics that shape the formation of subjectivity. I believe these two theories, despite coming from different theoretical backgrounds, can be used complimentarily to account for the participants' self-directed and external mis/recognition. In the next section, I put forward the concept of 'laddish mis/recognition' to explore the moments, experiences and processes of being granted or denied recognition within the complex context of lad culture.

8.3 LADDISH MIS/RECOGNITION

The concept of laddish mis/recognition combines elements of Benjamin and Fraser's theories of recognition. To be mis/recognised depends on the possibility of being granted the capacity to participate in social life as a full member of society. It could be argued that within lad culture, underpinned by sexism, misogyny, homophobia and, racism, the students in my project would be misrecognised. Not only because of the threatening atmosphere to their safety, as it has been explored in past chapters, but also because of the institutionalised patterns that promote, either directly or indirectly, the reproduction of laddish behaviours in British University campuses. However, the experience of mis/recognition not only occurs as an external process, so as to say, following the model of the outside in. It can be self-directed, through the catching of one self in a moment of contradiction and conflict, or in a moment of intersubjectivity where one's identity is challenged by one self, destabilised and questioned. For example, while some students positioned themselves as irreversibly against lad culture, they did admit participating in laddish activities and behaving 'laddy' sometimes. It is these situations of self-mis/recognition that I also aim to explore to offer an understanding of the subjective processes that structure one's sense-making of lad culture.

The participants discussed diverse and multiple mechanisms by which they felt wrongly done to by lad culture. From assault to verbal harassment, all groups shared experiences of injustice and abuse. These stories of mistreatment were not, however, always described as occurring within situations of laddish interactions, meaning, moments in which they had a direct

interaction with the lads themselves. In some of the stories, lads were only involved indirectly, they were not centred in the narrative. Instead, the participants highlighted the university institution as the cause of the mistreatment.

Extract 1 [Chapter 7 Group]:

Eve:	I think [name] University's problem, and I'm gonna say this, with no fear, [name] Uni spends more time promoting the Uni that they do improving the Uni, they don't listen to any improvement, they just focus on 'we need to get more people' and I think that's a big, big, big problem, and it's what I found the most like, in-about my whole Uni experience-
Anne:	-that they can have someone that dangerous on University campus and think 'oh, a slap on the wrist, that's gonna do it-
Mark:	-what happened on University campus?
Eve:	uhm… I was explaining, you know, Ed, housemate, ex-housemate-
Mark:	-oh yeah-
Eve:	-cos he got like a warning from the Uni for like his behaviour and stuff but he didn't get-it didn't get any more than that, and even the police officer was like 'he's-he's dangerous'. The police officer said to me like that he-he was like alright, you won't went-he won't get those warnings pretty quick but he was like 'I doubt that he will get kicked out of Uni really'…. If you think about it-
Anne:	I-I think that's like, really unacceptable, especially like a lot I think-it's okay that the University to certain extent is open that people can and makes mistakes but to that extent where you are considered by the authorities as dangerous to other people and yourself you should not be allowed in an open campus like this.

(Meeting 3, 6th March 2017)

In this extract, the participants constructed the University institution as lacking in their support for the students' welfare. By contrast, they also constructed it as more preoccupied with increasing their number of students through advertising. This could be linked to wider discussions on the marketization of universities (Mahony and Weiner 2019; Phipps 2018). In their talk, the participants highlighted the neoliberal orientation of the University, where successful advertising equals more students and economic gains. Hence, as Eve said, improving the safety of students falls to the background as the University becomes instead preoccupied with raising student numbers for further monetary benefits ("*they don't listen to any improvement, they just focus on 'we need to get more people'*"). Eve regarded this as a "*big problem*" she had to deal with and suffer on a personal level in her University experience. As discussed in Chapter 7, Eve's University years were marked by an abusive relationship she was involved in. Eve gave account of some of the details of this relationship, and mentioned at one

point she had to call the police for protection ("*but I had to get the police involve to get me out of the house because like, he wou-and… you know what he was like, he was a lad"*). It is this experience that both Eve and Anne referred to as the one where the University failed in its safeguarding role for its students.

Eve and Anne denounced the University's insufficient support and involvement, particularly since, as Eve recounts, "*even the police officer*" considered the student she was in a relationship with as dangerous, which works to legitimise her fear of him. In doing this, Eve presented the police as taking the situation seriously, in contrast to the University's lack of serious response. Anne criticised the institution as only giving him "*a slap on the wrist*", and sarcastically highlighting how inadequate this was saying "*that's gonna do it*". With this, it could be interpreted Anne was pointing to the shortness of the University's response in stopping predatory and misogynistic behaviours on campuses, when all the men get is a slap instead of a severe disciplinary action. At the end of the extract, Anne characterised the University's role as "*really unacceptable*". After acknowledging the positive of universities in being open to students' mistakes, she drew the line of this soft approach at the point where authorities have labelled someone as "*dangerous*", therefore placing again crucial emphasis on the role of the police in the situation.

In this story, hence, the participants, and more specifically, Eve, are misrecognised by institutional patterns of injustice and cultural value (Fraser 1997; 1998; 2000), which valorise more student recruitment than student protection. The male student, despite his predatory behaviour, is recognised as a full participant in society, as he was seen as barely facing any punishment for his acts, whereas Eve, as a female, is categorically misrecognised and denied equal access to participation in campus life. As Eve reported earlier in the discussion, this experience resulted in restricting her movement around the city and within student social spaces ("*I'm scared to go out… I haven't been out since I started Uni cos I was just scared that I'd see him in the club cos he goes out pretty much Tuesday and Friday*"). Although it could be argued that this is a self-imposed restriction, Eve seemed to interpret it as resulting from the lack of protection by the University.

The institutionalised pattern of misrecognition in this extract can also be located within the broader and current conversation about universities' responses to sexual harassment and rape. For example, the University of Warwick has come under heavily mediated scrutiny after

allowing 11 male students back on campus after 1-year suspension for engaging in racist and misogynistic conversations targeting fellow students in a WhatsApp chat (Busby 2018c). The messages shared in the group encouraged others to rape specific students and contained the use of racist slurs. The original University response to this was to ban two of the male students involved in the chat conversations for 10 years. However, the length of the ban was reduced to one year, therefore allowing for an earlier return to campus (Lee and Kennelly 2019). This change in the institution's response caused a national condemnation which was particularly taken up in social media under the hashtag #shameonyouwarwick, which evidences the popularity of what Khoja-Moolji (2015: 347) calls "hashtag feminism" and broader digital feminist activism and responses to misogyny and rape culture (Keller, Mendes and Ringrose 2016; Mendes, Keller and Ringrose 2019; Mendes, Ringrose and Keller 2018).

The participants presented the support received from the University as short and inadequate in both fighting and protecting students from lad culture. But they were also able to turn this critical gaze towards themselves. As explained earlier in the chapter, mis/recognition is not only experienced through external processes (for example, through institutionalised oppressions), but it can also be part of the formation of an internalised self, emerging in moments of intersubjectivity. During one of the meetings with the Gender Equality group, I asked them what they thought their relationship to lad culture was.

Extract 2 [Chapter 7 Group]:

> Anne: I think I'm definitely-I definitely do partake in it on a level like, not deny-I think it sounds-it sounds kinda like, bad to say like and kinda against the notions or questions the notions of feminism in itself but there is-they have like there are archetypes of girls who go out or girls at University and ehm… I don't think I-like a lo-like you'll find a lot of girls that fit-fit into them cos-cos you're su-you're supposed to be a certain way-you're supposed to be drinking bottles of wine, talking about your feelings or chit-chat like that or sometimes you can just be like-the notions of a lad. So, I definitely think I do myself at like, especially in like in terms of sports. That's kinda more outside of University that's more back home. And on nights out I do to a certain extent but still-I still that other like perspective where I can critique it so like-it's like ethnography really I could be a part of it but still be able to critique it and like look at certain po-parts of it. So, to a certain extent I think lad culture and uni culture they do overlap but once again there're still extremes which should've been condemned.
>
> *(Meeting 3, 6th March 2017)*

Here, Anne discussed her participation in lad culture. She presented it as something she did not deny (hence confessing to it), therefore indirectly suggesting its negative connotations ("*it sounds kinda like, bad*"), portraying it as questioning "*the notions of feminism in itself*". Anne's decision to characterise her partaking in laddish behaviours as directly opposite to feminism might suggest an acknowledgement of a laddish mis/recognition, which I argue, involves three characteristics. First, a recognition of laddishness as directly challenging feminist ideas. Second, a misrecognition of herself as both participating in lad culture while identifying as a feminist. This form of misrecognition emerges in a moment of intersubjectivity where the mental state of thirdness that opens the door to surrender and, subsequently, to full recognition, is foreclosed. Anne's talk in this text is far from a surrender to let in someone else's view; instead, she is sitting in tension and in constant negotiation between her feminism and her participation in lad culture. Even though it could be argued she accepted this tension, her attempt at justifying her participation by framing it as ethnographic suggests the opposite. In fact, Anne acknowledged the tension through identifying her in-betweenness. Third, and in connection to this, there is a potential misrecognition projected by others onto her conflicting identity (feminist/laddish). It is the possibility to be misread, to be misrecognised as contradicting feminism, that I argue underpins her decision to "*not deny*" her participation in lad culture. Considering recognition is the dyadic relationship where two people who see each other as similar yet separate, I argue Anne's confession tackles the fear of being misrecognised as not the subject other people believed her to be (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019a).

In the extract, Anne also rationalized and justified her participation in lad culture. This was done by portraying a dichotomised view of what she referred to as the "*archetypes of girls*" at University. In her talk, Anne recounted the two possible and seemingly only available archetypes of female identity: one that appears to be shaped by stereotypical discourses of femininity, particularly visible through specific alcohol consumption and ways of socialising ("*you're supposed to be a certain way-you're supposed to be drinking bottles of wine, talking about your feelings or chit-chat*"), and another one where one adopts more of a laddish identity ("*sometimes you can just be like-the notions of a lad*"). It is due to this limited availability of University female identities that I argue Anne justified her partaking in laddish behaviours. She linked this participation to her engagement with sports, yet she positioned this as outside University spheres, as something that happens "*more back home*". This suggests the transcendibility of lad culture outside of University spaces, where Anne also located her participation within the context of the nighttime economy ("*And on nights out I do to a certain*

extent"). I argue this could be due to the hedonism-seeking culture that promotes excessive alcohol consumption, which has been linked to the reproduction of lad culture (de Visser and Smith 2007; Dempster 2011; Phipps and Young 2013) (see Chapter 7 for a full discussion on the nighttime economy). Following this, Anne constructed herself as highly critical of lad culture in spite of her participation, and characterised her position through the concept of ethnography. In doing this, Anne further constructed herself as both external and internal to lad culture, a position she argued enables her *"to critique it and like look at certain parts of it"*. In light of this, I argue Anne understood her complicated position through a misrecognition of herself, acknowledging her laddish identity as someone who is actually not a lad. Following this account, another participant was prompted to comment on her relationship with lad culture, as Anne questioned her directly.

Extract 3: [Chapter 7 Group]

Anne:	[…] Eve how do you feel about lad culture at University?
Eve:	uhm… well, I hate it but-
Anne:	-have you ever felt like you've been a part of it?
Eve:	Well, yeah, a lot, mainly in first year with the housemate and stuff but-
Mark:	-yeah, no, that-you're not really a part of it, more like a-
Eve:	-it is, I was a part of it because basically when we-when I moved in there was him and his friend who does like sport-sports stuff at Uni, very, very laddy… And my first like two weeks at Uni it was just hanging out-around with those two and like, I went along with it like I thought it was funny but then obviously the-the more into the year I got the more I realised how like toxic it was and how it affected the women around me and I was oblivious to it. So, I-it did-that-it really did affect me loads and I have like partaken in it or whatever but quickly kinda realised that I just wasn't, it's more toxic than anything.

(Meeting 3, 6th March 2017)

Above, Anne questioned Eve's feelings concerning lad culture. Eve's immediate response was rather affective (*"I hate it"*). Her reply was direct, her use of the word 'hate' reflected a visceral reaction to it. In spite of this, Eve confessed having partaken in lad culture in the past, particularly during her first year at University, which might suggest a time of higher vulnerability and immaturity. It is worth pointing out Mark's participation in the conversation. In his talk, he seemed to dismiss Eve's admittance and attempted to make sense of it not as a direct involvement on her part, but rather, as something else ("*yeah, no, that-you're not really a part of it, more like a*"). Continuing with her account, Eve constructed her participation in lad culture as a result of her proximity to lads themselves. She explained having moved into accommodation on campus with two guys (one of them was Ed, the man she discussed in

extract 1) who she described as involved in "*very laddy*" things such as sports. Spending time with them was presented as the cause for her partaking in lad culture. However, she described herself as more passively than actively participating, as she argued "*I went along with it like I thought it was funny*". This suggests her involvement was more something she passively and complicitly agreed to, rather than something she did herself. She furthered her ambiguous participation later in the extract, suggesting, "*I have like partaken in it or whatever*", with *"whatever"* allowing her to distance herself from more actively taking part.

Recounting how her attitude changed, Eve described it as obvious, as an unquestionable path she followed in stepping away from lad culture ("*then obviously the-the more into the year I got the more I realised how like toxic it was*"). Through portraying this realisation as obvious, Eve seemed to imply a misrecognition of her own participation in it, as something that was out of place. Like Anne in the previous extract, Eve recognised the unfitting of her subjectivity within these laddish environments, particularly after seeing how it affected herself and other women around her. She also pinpointed her shift in attitude to her being able to see through lad culture as "*toxic*". This appeared to suggest an interpretation of laddism as a toxic culture in general, which bears clear links with the concept of toxic masculinity (see Chapter 7 for a full discussion on toxic masculinity).

In another group, the participants were discussing their lack of involvement with lad culture when they recognised this to not be completely true, as they identified a specific way in which it had infiltrated them.

Extract 4: [Chapter 5 Group]

Jess:	I just realised I had a group chat and it was called 'lads-'.
Tori:	We had 'lads on-oh my god-
Jess:	-lads on tour?-
[*laughs*]	
Jess:	So basically, me and my dad and my sister were going to Spain and we were gonna go on like fun holiday, cos it was just us three. No adults, no children with us, mom is not with us so we were just gonna go like, drinking and partying. And the group was called 'lads on tour' cos like, clearly, we subconsciously associated that with lads-
Tori:	-yeah. Cos, when I went to Romania last with a research trip with all-as an all-girls group my best-one of my best friends at the time would comment on every single one of my Instagram pictures, she was with us, hashtag lads on tour. And she's massively like, feminist in every sense of the word, but thinking about it, she inheritably was

> subconscious and using the word 'lads on tour'. Whether if she was using it as like eh, to try and take away derogatory meanings from it and use it as like 'females can be lads too'.
>
> *(Meeting 1, 1st March 2018)*

In this extract, Jess and Tori admitted having been influenced by lad culture in their use of social media. At the beginning of the conversation, while they were giving account of their stories, they realised they both were in group chats called "*lads on tour"*, which is a popular expression used to describe a group of men going on holiday together. When they both started explaining the reasons behind the chat name, they shared a similar story: both of their 'lads on tour' experiences were a result of going on a trip. Jess recounted the creation of a group chat under the name 'lads on tour' due to an upcoming holiday in Spain with her father and sister. She pinpointed the logic of this name to the main objective of the trip, which was to drink and party. Despite having said her father was coming with them, Jess still presented this holiday as adult-free, and particularly drew attention to the fact that her mother was not joining them ("*No adults, no children with us, mom is not with us so we were just gonna go like, drinking and partying*"). Jess' exclusion of her father from the label 'adult' hints an interpretation of him as what Cross (2008: 2) calls "pal dads" in the "culture of immaturity".

Cross (2008) argues that, within media culture, masculinity has been constructed through immaturity, portraying a father figure that is playful, goofy and in denial of responsibilities. In a similar vein, Hammad (2014: 91) argues the emergence of what she refers to as "postfeminist fatherhood" through popular cinema, which is characterised by a "postfeminist immature masculinity". It is possible to see how mediated configurations of masculinity as immature and adolescent are reflected in Jess' interpretation of her dad as a non-adult. In this regard, Jess' talk seems to construct the mother as the only adult of the family, therefore portraying her as counter to the father: the mother as the serious and responsible one with whom the holidays would be less oriented towards "*drinking and partying*". It is, therefore, the lack of the mother as symbolising adulthood and responsibility, and instead, the presence of the non-adult father, that suggested the linking of their party trip to lad culture and hence, the name of the group. As Jess explained "*the group was called 'lads on tour' cos like, clearly we subconsciously associated that with lads*". In this extract, Jess recognised her engagement with laddish ideas and terminology, which sits in contradiction to what she had claimed earlier in the conversation regarding her organic distancing from lad culture ("*I think I've distanced myself but not knowing that I've distanced myself, it's just happened*"). In this regard, Jess' recognition of this

apparent proximity to laddishness positions her in a state of misrecognition, as she acknowledged the conflicting of her situation and subjectivity.

Tori's story also involved a trip, in her case, a research one to Romania with her fellow student-researcher friends. She recounted having one of the friends she travelled with commenting on the pictures Tori uploaded to the social platform 'Instagram' with the hashtag #ladsontour. In her talk, Tori contrasted her friend's use of this laddish expression to a description of her friend as "*massively like, feminist in every sense of the word*". Tori thus portrayed her friend as an authentic feminist, which sharpened the contrast drawn between using laddish terminology and her feminist identity. In doing this, Tori pointed to the incompatibility of both things: her proximity to laddish terminology and her feminism. In light of this, I argue, Tori mis/recognised her friend: first, by recognising her as an authentic feminist; and second, by misrecognising her use of the laddish expression 'lads on tour'. In this way, Tori acknowledged her friend's feminist subjectivity did not fit the behaviour displayed.

In an attempt to make sense of this misrecognition, Tori suggested the resignifying possibilities of her friend's use of 'lads on tour' ([*w]hether if she was using it as like eh, to try and take away derogatory meanings from it and use it as like 'females can be lads too"*). Butler (1997) explains resignification involves the cultural reworking of a detrimental term to a celebratory one. For example, Ringrose and Renold (2012) engage with this theory to make sense of how the injurious term 'slut' has been re-signified as a term for celebration and women empowerment, particularly within the context of SlutWalks. In this extract, Tori interpreted her feminist friend's use of 'lads on tour' within the context of an all-female students' research trip as a way to resignify the term from its "*derogatory meanings*" and celebrate it "*as like 'females can be lads too'*". In this way, Tori's initial mis/recognition of her friend as sitting in contradiction between her feminist identity and her engagement with laddishness seems to be resignfied: her use of 'lads-on-tour' was, then, a feminist strategy all along.

8.4 CONCLUSION

In this "Cutting in" the thesis, I have theorised the concept of laddish mis/recognition by drawing on Benjamin's psychoanalytic notion of 'recognition' and Fraser's Marxist oriented idea of 'misrecognition'. I understand mis/recognition as an intersubjective process of contradiction, of displacement, where one's identity sits in conflict, is challenged and

questioned. However, my interpretation of the concept also pays attention to the ways a person experiencing misrecognition is prevented from participating as full members of society, therefore involving specific material and political consequences. In this sense, laddish mis/recognition as a concept looks at the different modes (e.g. external –social–, internal –psychic –) the processes of being mis/recognised involves without superimposing one in the other. In light of this, I use laddish mis/recognition as a psychosocial approach to explore the psychic, institutional and cultural mechanisms that shape the participants' formation of subjectivity through mis/recognition within the context of lad culture.

In the following chapter, I deepen my account of misrecognition by exploring how mis/recognition works for LGBTQIA+ students within the potentially threatening context of lad culture. I consider the ways LGBTQIA+ students construct their gender identity and manage their sexuality while navigating the heterosexist lad culture. From being misgendered to being sexually objectified because of their sexuality, I explore LBGTQIA+ group's constant negotiation for recognition in an environment where their identities are continually up for debate and consequently, consistently misrecognised.

Chapter 9: "*It Genuinely Makes Me Fear For My Life*": Negotiating Lad Culture as LGBTQIA+

In this chapter, I explore the discursive-affective entanglements of the stories shared by members of a LGBTQIA+ Student Union in relation to lad culture. The LGBTQIA+ Student Union members were recruited for two reasons: their interest in equality, gender and sexualities, which are pivotal topics in this research; and their unique interpretation of lad culture as members of the LGBTQIA+ community. As stated earlier in the thesis, one of the core objectives of this study is to understand the intersections that shape the experience of lad culture in HE. In order to achieve this, bringing participants who identified as LGBTQIA+ is crucial for the research to understand how their experiences of lad culture are shaped by their LGBTQIA+ identities.

First, I look at the participants' construction of the lads as shaped through class, space and reinforced by the particular figure of the teachers. Drawing on personal experiences, the participants described teachers across different levels (e.g. primary school, secondary school) as complicit with laddish behaviours by either actively encouraging it, or covering it. In this section, I also explore the group comparisons between certain behaviours within the LGBTQIA+ community and lad culture. From predatory behaviours to exclusionary and hegemonic practices, the participants described lad culture as leaking into some elements within the community.

Second, I examine the participants' navigation of lad culture as LGBTQIA+ and their affective construction of identity within this context. The group described their position as LGBTQIA+ as involving a careful consideration of their behaviour, the way they chose to present their gender, and even how they made sense of their own gender identity and sexuality. For example, one of the participants, Dan, a trans man, explained how he had to conscientiously present and act manly without behaving laddy. Kim, a cis-lesbian, gave an account of negotiating her sexuality under the umbrella of heterosexist lad culture, which involved a heavy monitoring of her behaviour, from fashion choices to actively choosing against having a romantic relationship for fear of harassment by men. Having to navigate the heteronormative context of lad culture resulted in disidentification. In stepping out of heteronormative expectations of gender presentation, identity and sexuality, the participants' identities emerged in disidentification from masculinity, femininity and heterosexuality. As a result, the participants experienced

misrecognition due to their identities not neatly fitting with traditionally understandings of gender and sexuality. The process of navigating lad culture was deeply affective, inasmuch as affect circulated and accumulated in moments of both direct and indirect confrontation, and through the process of identity construction. Finally, I look at the discourses drawn by the participants when discussing how to stop lad culture. The group's challenge to lad culture included a marked emphasis on the deconstruction of masculinity and gender roles more generally.

9.1 DEFINING LAD CULTURE: CLASS, QUEERNESS AND COMPLICITNESS

The participants constructed themselves as knowing of lad culture and its workings. This shared knowledge was built on specific stereotypes that saw lads as reproducing very traditional ways of doing masculinity, involving misogynistic, homophobic and racist behaviours (Connolly,1994; de Boise 2015; Phipps, Ringrose, Renold and Jackson 2018; Martino 2000). In particular, participants described lad culture and its performance of masculinity as shaped by class. It was this particular discussion of class where the participants adopted a knowing position and, as a result, engaged in a psychologisation of the lads. I turn to this below.

9.1.1 LADS & CLASS

From the beginning, the participants' sense-making of lad culture involved a reading of it as shaped by the lads' class position, which gave cue to a discussion on privilege. This discussion was, however, dichotomised. While there were some participants that believed lads had benefitted from affluent and consequently easy lives due to their position within the social structure, other members of the group argued contrary to this belief and claimed the existence of lads at the other side of the class spectrum, referring thus to lads from impoverished backgrounds. For example:

Extract 1:

Bob: Oh, man, I think it comes part in parts all of it, the richer you are and the easier your life, the more easier it is to be a lad, don't it?

[*Later in the conversation*]

Bob: I think that they've just had life easy for so long, that uhm, the whole point of lad ca-culture from how I've seen it it's just being chilled and

laid back and doing whatever you want and uhm, not really being fussed about anything. And so, whenever they see activism or, uhm, they hear about things like racism, and these sorts of things, it sounds to them like people are kicking a fuss up over nothing. And it-I don't know, I feel like maybe if it matt-if there was a way that it could matter to them on a more personal level, but then at the same time I can see difficult that can be for some people. Because some people just don't wanna see life like that, they have it too easy to care, so yeah

Kyle: Sometimes not caring is kind of like a coping mechanism.

Bob: Yeah.

(Meeting 1, 24th March 2017)

Above, Bob's talk situated lads in the comfortable middle-classes. Because of this, Bob portrayed lads as living an easy life. In fact, Bob directly correlated being a lad with wealth, therefore characterising prosperous economic resources as defining how easily one can become a lad. As a consequence of their wealthy status, Bob further depicted lads as "*laid back*" and uncaring, which they then connected to lads' apathy towards social causes, such as racism. However, it was not only wealth that, for Bob, blinded them from caring about social justice: it was also the fact that, from their privileged position in society, these causes did not directly affect them. Not caring was thus associated with selfishness. In Bob's narrative, lads were not blinded by their wealth or privilege, but it was their wealth and privilege that actively worked against caring. In Bob's words, "*they have it too easy to care*".

Nevertheless, another participant, Kyle, challenged Bob's arguments by psychologising lads. While remaining with an image of the lad as privileged, Kyle's talk situates the act of not caring within the frame of coping: not caring as means to cope. The psychological discourse Kyle drew on seems to construct men, or lads, as having a sort of internal "good person", a doer behind the deed (Butler 1990). In this regard, not caring was interpreted as a coping mechanism with the strict, unemotional and capable ideals reproduced by hegemonic masculinity (Ridge, Emslie and White 2011).

In contrast, challenging Bob's assumption on lads, Lena offered their point of view on the intersection between class and lads suggesting:

Extract 2:

Lena: Lads can exist either side of the class. Cos I came from a really impoverished area, and there were certainly lads there who, uhm, were, I have a friend-had a friend who was a lad who had, uhm, a pair of shoes

> in which each shoe was a different size than the other cos his mum got it cheaper that way, so he had a size seven and a size eight, but he was definitely a lad and it was, he was very poor. But then when I got older, uhm, when one of my friend's dad was a very well-off business man and we went to a party in London and it got crashed by a bunch of lads who uhm, could've easily been on upper-class twit of the year back in the day. Uhm, I think the only difference is probably, what booze they buy. […] Whether it's-whether it's a big bottle of White Lightning or uhm, a couple of bottles of Prosecco, it's probably the only real difference in them.
>
> *(Meeting 1, 24th March 2017)*

Above, Lena claimed the universality of lads across the class spectrum, highlighting the widespread performance of laddish identities regardless of class. In their talk, Lena presented two types of lads, based on class and economic resources. Lena talked about a friend from a "*very poor*" background whom they identified as a lad, as well as some "*upper-class*" lads who crashed a party they were attending. In Lena's story, the only difference between these two types of lads were their consumption practices. Ricciardelli, Clow and White (2010: 65) argue laddism is a form of "consumerist masculinity" located in an increasing consumer-oriented society. Such consumerism shapes one's relationship to the body and self (Featherstone 2010) and, within the context of masculinity, enables the production of both dominant and marginalised masculinities (Cheng 1999). In connection to this, Lena suggested alcohol consumption practices marked the distinction between different types of lads. Hence, in their talk, Lena positioned the Italian wine 'Prosecco' as symbolising middle- and upper-class drinking choice, while portraying the English cider 'White Lightning' as a marker of lower and working-class alcohol consumption.

This complexity in the image of the lads can also be reflected in the students' drawings. As explained in Chapter 4, the first meeting with all groups included a drawing activity to help break the ice. In this activity I asked the participants to draw what they thought a lad was. These drawings were saturated with class connotations, for example:

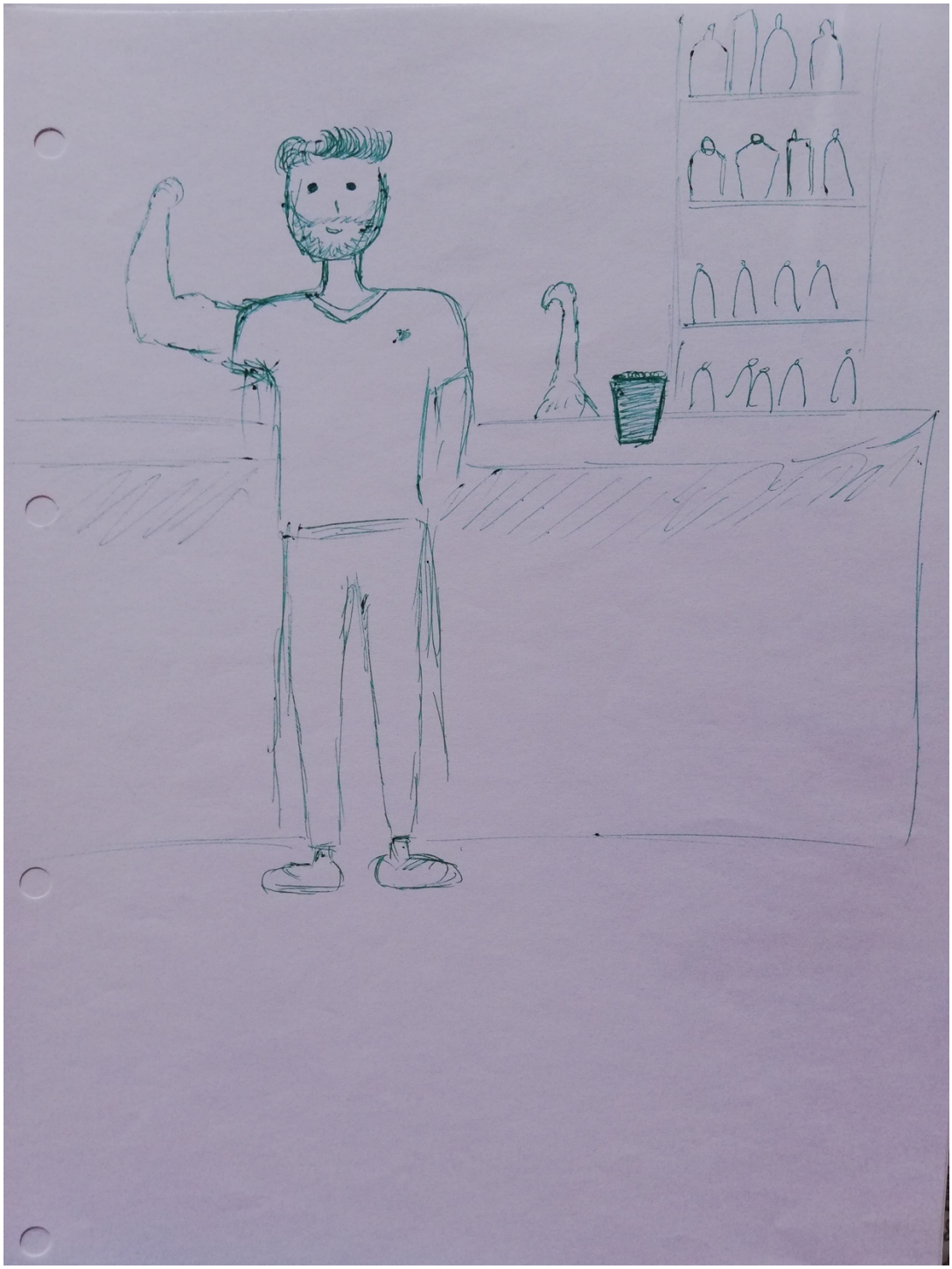

Figure 1.

(Image drawn by Lena, group 3, meeting 1, 24th March 2017)

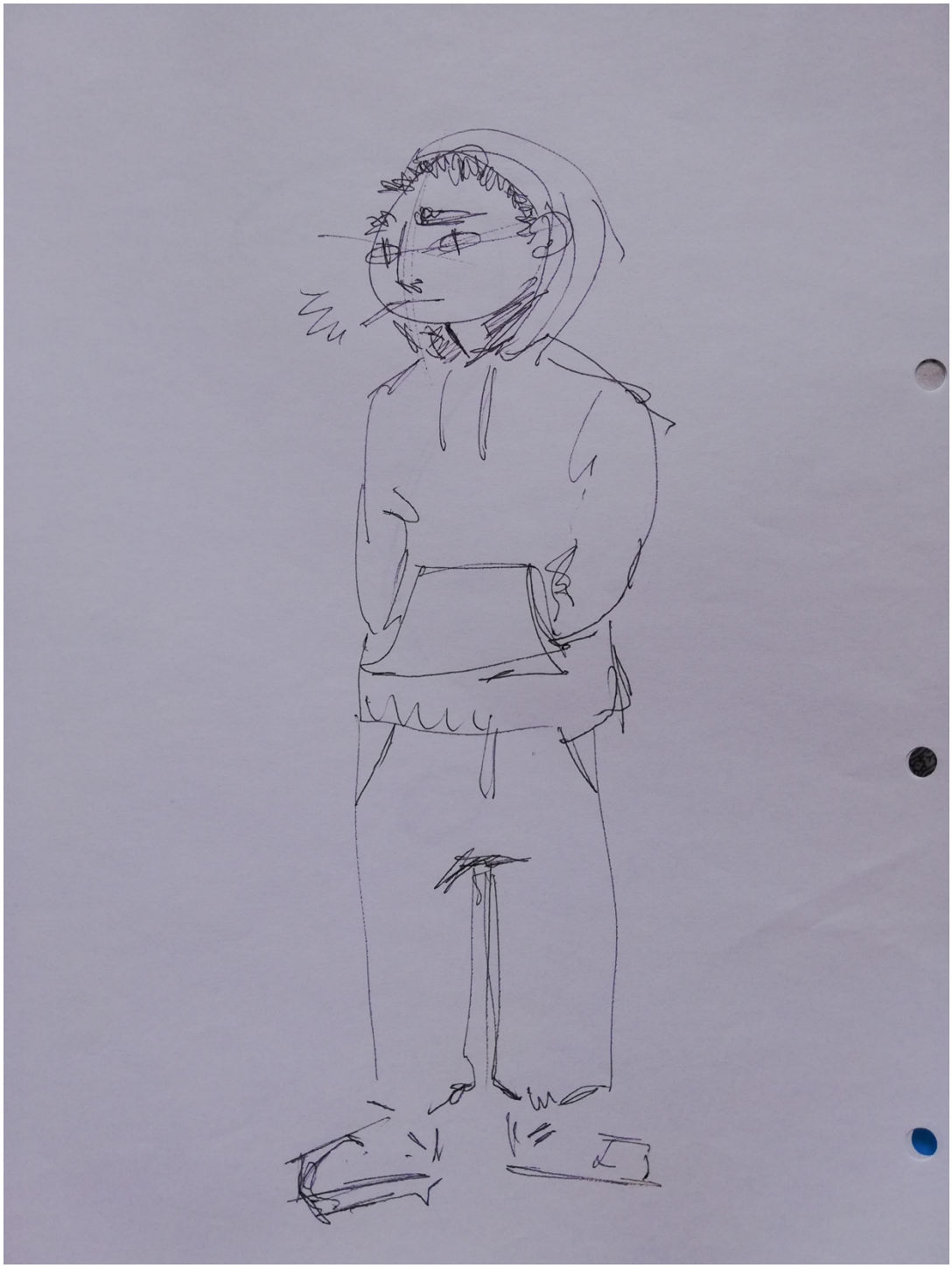

Figure 2.

(Image drawn by Patt, group 3, meeting 1, 24th March 2017)

Figure 1 depicts the lad as bearded (i.e. currently fashionable) and wearing branded clothes (see the symbol on the upper right side of his t-shirt). He also seems to care for his appearance, with him portrayed as muscly, therefore indicating this lad goes to the gym. In fact, this lad also resembles group 1's discussion on successful lads, described as wearing the right clothes and having the right physical appearance. On the contrary, figure 2 characterises a completely

different laddish stereotype. This lad wears baggy clothes and a hoodie, with no indication of brand. While the lad drawn in figure 1 appears within the settings of a pub drinking a pint, the lad in figure 2 is alone and smokes. These two drawings represent the breadth (and associated class symbolisms) of lad imaginaries. In this regard, lads appear to exist across the class spectrum, with the only distinguishing factor being their different engagement in consumerist practices, which resonated with the discussion on "un/successful lads" and correct laddish consumption from Chapter 7. Furthering their interpretations of the lads, the participants explored the overarching structures of support they believed were complicit in the reproduction of lad culture.

9.1.2 TEACHERS' COMPLICITY

In discussing the ways lad culture was supported in society, the participants identified the figure of the teacher, situated across different levels of education, as promoting lad culture. This incitement was described as taking different forms, such as the teachers adopting laddish attitudes themselves – being misogynistic – or by erasing lads' responsibility of their problematic practices and behaviours.

When discussing the complexities of growing up and having to construct one's own gender in the context of misogyny, the participants pointed to teachers' complicit behaviour in shaping the idea of masculinity. All the stories dealing with teachers' complicity with lad culture were situated in primary and secondary school settings, where teachers were described as having authority over the student body and, therefore, were less likely to have their ideas challenged. The power dynamics present in these particular contexts were described by the participants as rigid. As part of these discussions, Dan shared his own experiences with teachers' complicit behaviour, even though in his case, the complicity was indirect.

Extract 3:

> Dan: And that, cos like, there's so many complications surrounding being like being like a man and being like a teenager at the same time and like, because they well do things like attack feminine people and it's just, it's like adults kind of enforce as well, cos teachers were just as bad. There were like, like these girls like my school got told that it's a-like inappropriate [in reference to their skirts], that teachers, that male teachers are like looking at their skirts, cos they're too short. And the-those was people were like twelve, and it's like, the teachers really shouldn't be looking at a twelve-year-old.
>
> *(Meeting 2, 30th March 2017)*

Dan started by commenting on having to navigate between adolescent masculinity and manhood. Despite the potential complications, Dan highlighted adults as important figures in supporting gender norms, particularly drawing attention to the figure of male teachers. In Dan's talk, teachers were described in the same negative light as lads, inasmuch as they were believed to promote laddish behaviours. To illustrate his argument, Dan recounted a story from his secondary school years where he described girls being told off for wearing short skirts that were attracting attention from the male teachers. His narration points to the incongruity of responsibilising young girls for male teachers' predatory behaviours. This talk reproduces some of the critique of victim-blaming discourses that position women and girls as accountable for men's harassment or violence. Within the context of education, Susie McDonald, executive of the charity against domestic violence, 'Tender', has claimed teachers are guilty of victim-blaming students that come forward with stories of abuse and sexual bullying (Whittaker 2016). McDonald attributes this to the lack of training in gender violence for teachers, which consequently has negative effects on how teachers manage these cases, failing to recognise the magnitude of the problem (Whittaker 2016). This was further highlighted in Patt's story below:

Extract 4:

> Patt: One of my teachers, who was my tutor-teacher, we once had a conversation with him where he-he didn't use the word misogynist, but he was very much 'men are in charge of the household' kind of […] preferring men to be in charge and women are there to look at and have babies, and you know, clean and eh, eh, he ignored some, eh, I guess you could call it abuse at this point from one of the-the-the students, other student in the class called Robert. He-he would jab me in the stomach, like that. And eh, he came to class at one point, I was almost entirely covered, head to toe. Things were, my-I-I had like a pencil skirt on and a regular sort of long sleeve top, it was all not tight, but fitted and he called it my 'slut uniform', this guy, and the teacher saw all of this and just ignored it, completely ignored it and almost laughed along with it, more than anything. It's… yeah.
>
> *(Meeting 2, 30th March 2017)*

Above, Patt highlighted her secondary school teacher's overtly sexist mind frame. Patt suggested that although he did not use the word "*misogynist*", he could be interpreted as reproducing sexist and misogynistic ideas in class, such as ignoring the abuse she received by a male classmate. Patt described the harassment as physical and emotional, as she recounted being touched and slut shamed. In her talk, Patt criticised not only the teacher's lack of

involvement, but highlighted his complicity in the situation by depicting him as "*almost*" laughing along.

Patt's talk reflects what Connell (1995: 114) has termed "complicit masculinities". Connell (1995) typifies three masculinities: hegemonic, marginalised and subordinate masculinity. It is within the marginalised masculinities that Connell (2005) locates complicit masculinity, however she does not present these classifications as totally separate. In fact, Connell (2005) explains the possibility of overlapping of the categories. Connell argues hegemonic masculinity is never sharply separated from others, particularly from complicit ones. Connell (2005; 1995; 1991) defines this type of masculinity as men who benefit from patriarchy and the subordination of other men and women, however without fully embodying the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. In this extract, the teacher was portrayed as embodying the characteristic of hegemonic masculinity with regards to disseminating sexist and misogynistic ideas in class, but also complicit, as he not only remained silent, but was depicted as being supportive of the behaviour. Even though Connell (1991: 167) argues the complicit man keeps away from "strenuous masculine display", in this case, the teacher was presented as doing both: personifying a hegemonic masculinity in reproducing misogynistic ideas in class and also displaying complicit behaviour by not stopping Patt's abuser.

Discussing the support the participants believed lad culture had, the group also started identifying other places where they thought laddish behaviours were also being reproduced. As I explore below, this meant examining critically their own community. Within the LGBTQIA+ community, the participants seemed to be aware of practices that maintained sexism, misogyny and anti-effeminate behaviours, which they were able to connect to their construct of the lad.

9.1.3 GAY LADS

As the participants reflected on their encounters with lad culture, they realised some of these experiences had happened within the LGBTQIA+ community. Even though the group argued that LGBTQIA+ articulations of lad culture were different, they agreed on the existence of certain behaviours they identified as close to the ones deployed by lad culture. For example:

Extract 5:

Bob: To a certain extent, it's not lad culture but you can get the-the kind of stuff that you expect from lads in places like Colours, which is supposed to be a queer space. I mean, it's not the same but you still get like, the first time I was ever approached to by someone at a bar was in Colours […] and it was to the point where I had to run away and hide in the bathroom [*laughs*] mainly because, to be honest, me, looking like this I don't really get approached, it's not really something, for somebody who doesn't-who looks as feminine eh, to happen, but uhm… yeah, in Colours it did, and it was pretty much the first time that it happened for me, and it was a case of eh, a guy came up to me, and sort of bought my drink for me, like straight off, I didn't really know what to say by the time he already bought it and then he was already offering to go outside like within a minute and on so I ran pretty much. But yeah, I-it's that kinda thing that, it's not I wouldn't presume that the guy was, you know, a lad, but, I don't know, it seems to be something that's so ingrained in masculine culture in general.

Patt: Yeah. Almost in that, proving masculinity sort of aspect.

(Meeting 1, 24th March 2017)

In this extract, Bob, who identified as trans non-binary, pointed to the presence of laddish-like behaviours in queer spaces. Even though Bob distanced it from lad culture ("*I wouldn't presume that the guy was, you know, a lad*"), they were also able to highlight similarities. In doing so, Bob's talk seemed to present both a sameness and difference in the articulation of lad culture within the LGBTQIA+ community. This was illustrated in the extract, where Bob drew on a personal experience at a club where they recounted being approached by a man and hiding in the bathrooms as a result – a story not dissimilar to those told by the Gender Equality Society Group within heterosexual club spaces in Chapter 7. In describing being approached, Bob seemed to suggest a quick escalation of the situation, as Bob recounted the man buying them a drink right away, as well as inviting them outside straight after without waiting for Bob's response. Bob presented themselves as somewhat incapable of managing this escalation. Attempting to interpret the man's sudden and pressuring behaviour, Bob framed it as something "*ingrained in masculine culture*". Patt agreed with Bob and pointed to the need of some men to engage in "*proving masculinity*". Both Bob's argument and Patt's agreement seem to allude to the articulation of hegemonic masculinity by gay men as means to accrue 'masculine capital'.

In explaining the concept of masculine capital Ravenhill and de Visser (2017) de Visser, Smith and McDonnell (2009) and de Visser and McDonnell (2013) draw on Bourdieu's (1977; 1984[2010]) notion of 'symbolic capital'. For Bourdieu (1989: 17), symbolic capital refers to "the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized

as legitimate". Something becomes capital when it is recognised as such in society, and with this recognition, symbolic relations of power emerge, reinforcing and reproducing the power relations that shape "the structure of social space" (Bourdieu 1989: 21). With the acquisition of symbolic power through the resources available, hence, comes social position and prestige.

Drawing on this, the idea of 'masculine capital' refers to the specific gendered behaviours and practices that convey social power within the certain contexts they are produced in. These behaviours that afford social power are normally associated with traditional and hegemonic versions of masculinity (Ravenhill and de Visser 2017). de Visser and McDonnell (2013) argue the need to accrue masculine capital is particularly high for gay men, as homosexuality is understood as inferior to heterosexuality due to its associations with femininity, which position it as opposite to hegemonic masculinity. de Visser and McDonell (2013) identify two ways in which gay men, from their disadvantaged position, attempt to accrue masculine capital: through "muscularity and voice quality" (209) and self-labels to describe their sexual lives (e.g. 'top'/ 'bottom').

Read through this lens, one way to conceptualise Bob and Patt's interpretation of the man's behaviour could be through the idea of 'masculine capital'. Bob described the man as sexually assertive, while Patt portrayed him as "*proving masculinity*" through his pushy behaviour. I argue the participants' interpretation of the man's behaviour as something "*ingrained in masculine culture*" could points to its hegemonic masculine underpinnings of sexual conquests. In the ambition to accrue capital, the man's behaviour is understood as similar to that displayed by lads, inasmuch as their masculinity sits closer to the hegemonic, and therefore, socially powerful masculinity.

Furthering the links between the man's attitude and laddish behaviours, Bob's talk points to heterosexism within the LBGTQIA+ community. Bob seems to link their reasons for running away to their appearance, saying: "*I had to run away and hide in the bathroom mainly because, to be honest, me, looking like this I don't really get approached*". For Bob, their appearance prevented them from getting approached, which seems to suggest heterosexist anti-effeminacy attitudes within LGBTQIA+ spaces. Anti-effeminacy describes sexist ideas that reproduce the belief that men should not behave effeminately or appear feminine (Murgo et al. 2017). Murgo et al. (2017) link anti-effeminacy attitudes to internalised heterosexism, which refers to self-projected stigma about LGBT relations, attractions, behaviours and identities. Murgo et al.

(2017) argue that traditional masculinity discourses in the gay male community result in a rejection of visible queerness (e.g. through behaviours, clothing, general appearance, etc.) in favour of more masculine attitudes in order to 'appear heterosexual', rather than gay. As such, Murgo et al. (2017) explain, gay men that embrace more traditional forms of masculinity, both in their behaviour and looks, may have higher tendency to internalize heterosexism and reproduce anti-effeminacy. Following this, Taywaditep (2001) links anti-effeminacy to hegemonic masculinity, since constructions of more traditional masculinity are considered as superior to femininity in general.

Bearing this in mind, a possible way to interpret Bob's reaction to the scene described in their talk could be Bob's awareness of the anti-effeminate and internalised heterosexism among some circles in the LGBTQIA+ community. In this regard, I argue Bob could have considered their position as an effeminate non-binary person in a predominately cis-gay space ("*me, looking like this I don't really get approached*") and decided to leave. Bob also presented the speed of the encounter in general as making them feel confused ("*I didn't know what the hell was going on*").

Reading the LBGTQIA+ community as sometimes reproducing problematic behaviours, the participants further identified ways in which gay men in queer spaces engaged in practices that could be read as laddish, for example through apps such as Grindr. This sits in a broader field of research that explores the reproduction of hegemonic and misogynistic masculinities in gay or apparent gay-friendly spaces (Johnston and Samdahl 2004; Stasi and Evans 2013; Ging 2017). As Bob and Dan suggested of gay male misogyny:

Extract 6:

Bob: I-I don't like, more of a thing of the gay community, like, the queer community but like, you know, gay men who, uhm, say, 'I hate vaginas' and-

Dan: -well, it's the whole, 'No fats, no femmes' thing […] 'no fats, no femmes, no Asians'.

(Meeting 3, 6th April 2018)

Above, the participants summarised the discriminatory practices some gay men engage in. Bob highlighted how gay men might assert their homosexuality through an abject disgust of vaginas. Williscroft-Ferris (2016) frames this behaviour as misogynistic and transphobic, in which the trope of 'gay men hating vaginas' both reduces genitalia to objects of curiosity that

are dehumanised and disjoined from the human, and fails to recognise the diversity of sexual and gender identities. Discussing misogynistic attitudes among gay men, Stasi and Evans (2013) explore the dynamics of what they call glitter(foot)ball tactics in Iceland. In their work, Stasi and Evans (2013) look at the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity by football players of the gay Icelandic team and sports association 'Sterken'. Despite the progressive and inclusive politics underpinning Sterken, Stasi and Evans (2013) identify the reproduction of misogynistic behaviours and hegemonic ideas of masculinity with regards to strength. It was this tension, between non-hegemonic gay-accepting attitudes and hegemonic sexist ideas, that glitter(foot)ball tactics happened, acting as a glue between both through a neoliberal conceptualisation of "individualised activism and identity politics" (Stasi and Evans 2013: 573). In relation to this, gay men's engagement with hegemonic practices has also been documented by Ging (2017), particularly within the context of online spaces. Ging (2017) argues for the relevant role gay and progay discourses have among MRAs groups and online men communities such as 4/chan and r/TheRedPill.

In the extract, Dan also identified further problematic attitudes within the queer community underpinned by fat-phobia, anti-effeminacy, and racism. The utterance "*No fats, no femmes, no Asians*" refers to the Grindr taglines to specify sexual attraction or tastes. Chancellor Jr. (2015: 8) describes these taglines, with the addition of "no one over 30", as a "prevalent ideology" in gay spaces that highlights the gay hegemony of white, Adonis-looking men in the community. Edwards (2018) links these discriminatory and exclusionary behaviours to the desire for conventional masculinity in gay spaces, underpinned by ideas of hegemonic masculinity. Narratives of desirability for gay men, Edwards (2018) argues, are structured in a way that support a masculine hierarchy. In this hierarchy, gay men that present more conventional and therefore, more hegemonic forms of masculinity are rendered as more desirable and superior by other homosexual men. The result is a reproduction of normative gay ideals of muscularity and body image that are in line with those of normative masculinity (Moldes 2009). In this regard, men who are fat or effeminate are positioned as inferior and undesirable. The same follows for Asian men, who Eguchi (2011) argues, are regarded as 'sissy' and feminine within White-centred hegemonic masculinity, and therefore rendered as unattractive.

Thus, through these discussions, the participants were able to expose the hostility and discriminatory practices that frame and structure some LGBTQIA+ spaces. In this, the group

drew similarities between the LGBTQIA+ community and lad culture, where discourses of masculinity overlapped. The fact that laddish behaviours were reproduced within LGBTQIA+ spaces meant the participants, who positioned themselves outside of dominant modes of masculinity, struggled feeling safe. Within the overarching construct of lad culture, the participants gave accounts of the problems they encountered in order to exist as non-normative LGBTQIA+ in such a potentially threatening environment.

9.2 NEGOTIATING LGBTQIA+ IDENTITY WITHIN LAD CULTURE

The antagonistic dimensions of lad culture made it difficult for the participants to ensure their personal safety and negotiate their own LGBTQIA+ identity. The risk of aggression meant participants engaged in a constant managing of themselves and their interactions. As a result, the participants also appeared to be involved in a continuous management of the affective environment they were in. Before turning to the group' negotiation of their identities, I would like to briefly explore one of the participant's take on lad culture and its affective underpinnings, to outline the sticky atmospheres the group had to deal with in their everyday lives. During a meeting, I asked the participants to express the feelings they associated with lad culture by drawing on personal experiences with it. One of the responses stood out from the rest, as it expressed the concern of having to manage the constant possibility of danger.

Extract 7:

> Tom: I got anxiety, uneasiness, danger and frustration. Danger is because of the-because of like, I don't know how easily violence seems to come when they're around and they're-you know, being care-free […] Every time at a social place, e.g. pub, they could decide to make you their target of attention.
>
> *(Meeting 2, 30th March 2017)*

In this extract, Tom identified the different affective entanglements of lad culture. It is the potential for violence and danger that accompanied lad culture that became the focal point in the mobilisation of the affective responses he listed. Tom described this violence as occurring "*easily*". The participant further located his fear within "*social place[s]*" such as pubs. This resonated with the other groups in the research, who also emphasised the role of places like bars and pubs in generating affective relations and sticky atmospheres (see Chapters 6 and 7). In Tom's talk, pubs appeared as sites where danger was constant, inasmuch as one could easily become the lads' "*target*". This demonstrated Tom's knowledge of the self-awareness that

being singled out produced, particularly within the unfriendly context of lad culture. The feelings Tom listed can be interpreted as potentially shaping the relationship between the object (lad culture) and the subject (Tom) in the extract, making the latter feel uneasy or worried about what could happen.

This potentially problematic encounter with the lads was therefore marked by affectivity, which emerged as something the participants needed to navigate. This navigation was not only needed to avoid conflict and remain safe, but it was also presented as necessary by the group to construct and negotiate their LGBTQIA+ identity within this confrontational culture.

9.2.1 (DIS)IDENTIFYING MASCULINITY/FEMININITY

Across the transcripts, the participants gave accounts of the problems they faced when navigating lad culture as LGBTQIA+ students. This included instances of assault and danger. The group positioned itself as constantly being on the lookout, negotiating their presentations of the self along the continuum of masculinity and femininity. The members of the group that identified as trans and/or non-binary, recounted the sometimes-impossible subject positions they inhabited. For example:

Extract 8:

Dan:	I'm pretty sure you be can classified as, it's-it's lad culture, I mean like, lad culture is basically masculinity, and toxic masculinity […] And like, it makes life very confusing when you're trying to aim for masculinity, but also not-
Kim:	-yeah-
Dan:	-cos you don't wanna be a fuckboy or a lad. But also, everyone else is telling you to do that.
Bob:	Because that's what a man is.
Dan:	Yeah, that's why, there's… they're like 'be a man' but also, I don't wanna do that, because I don't wanna be a dick.

(Meeting 2, 30th March 2017)

Above, Dan exposed the difficulties of performing a masculine identity that fell out of laddish hegemonic ideals. Dan described lad culture as *"basically masculinity"*. This resonates with Dempster's (2009) take on laddishness as a hegemonic template for British masculinity. Dempster (2009) argues that hegemonic masculinity is a discourse that appears to have power to represent current 'truths' about gender. He claims these discourses are embodied through different templates, such as the 'macho' or the 'lad'. In the extract, Dan also defined

masculinity by drawing a direct relationship between lad culture and toxic masculinity. The concepts of toxic and hegemonic masculinity are closely related to each other. Connell (2005) describes hegemonic masculinity as a system of dominance that includes toxic practices (e.g. violence) in order to reify men's dominance. Similarly, Haider (2016) states violence, either physical, symbolic or verbal, becomes the default way through which men assert masculinity.

It is this connection between hegemonic and toxic practices shaping laddish masculinity that posed a problem for Dan. He positioned himself as aiming for masculinity as a trans man, but also as wanting to distance himself from its most problematic articulations, such as the "*fuckboy*" or the "*lad*". His talk also pointed to the social pressures to conform to hegemonic forms of masculinity, therefore highlighting the essentialised understanding of masculine identity as having hegemonic masculinity (or hegemonic masculinity as an aspiration) as its common denominator. Managing these tensions became an obstacle for Dan when performing his masculinity. In this regard, Dan emerged in an in-between situation: wanting to "*be a man*", meaning acting in a way in which he would be intelligible as a man, while simultaneously rejecting this due to what being understood as a man entails. Consequently, Dan's identity was a site of struggle; masculinity as the condition of (im)possibility (Muñoz 1999: 6). It could be argued Dan's in-betweenness sits in disidentification (Muñoz 1999), which I explain below.

Muñoz (1999), building on a multiplicity of theoretical frameworks, from Althusserian theories to Chicana feminism, theorises the disidentificatory identity performances of minoritarian subjects. Muñoz (1999) develops a theory of minoritarian subjects, arguing the effects of colonial rule have placed them outside the dominant (white, heteronormative) ideologies of race and sex. Disidentificatory identities, Muñoz argues, are emerging identities in-difference, which fail interpellation carried out by the dominant public sphere. Interpellation is a theoretical concept developed by Althusser (1971), where individuals recognise themselves (are hailed) as subjects through ideology. However, Muñoz also draws on Pêcheux's (1982) identification matrix to position his concept of disidentification.

One of the modes Pêcheux (1982) developed to describe the subject's self-construction through ideological practices was identification. Pêcheux (1982) divided this process in two: a 'good subject' that identifies and internalises the dominant ideology, and the 'bad subject' that rejects it and aims to counter-identify the symbolic system. Muñoz (1999) locates his concept of disidentification as a failed interpellation building on Pêcheux's (1982) theory. This is because

the failing interpellation, for Muñoz, does not mean an oppositional rejection nor an assimilation. Disidentification works on and against the dominant ideology in an attempt to "transform a cultural logic from within, always labouring to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of local or everyday struggles of resistance" (Muñoz 1999: 12).

However, Muñoz (1999) is careful to highlight that disidentification does not mean picking and choosing identification. As he explains, it is rather a reworking of the contradictory dimensions of identities. It is a survival strategy for minority subjects inasmuch as the cultural codes for identification are not available and/or accessible to them. For example, Dan, as a trans man, finds it difficult to entirely identify with and reproduce the accepted and hegemonic version of masculinity. Dan's talk recognised the impossibilities and contradictions that performing masculinity without fully reproducing and embodying hegemonic ideals entails. In this regard, Dan's identity emerges in disidentification, acknowledging the discrepancies he felt when performing masculinity.

Standing in disidentification proved, however, to be a difficult strategy to develop when faced with people's misrecognition and expectations of gender identity and presentation (see chapter 8 for a full account on misrecognition). For example, Bob, who identified as trans non-binary, discussed always being hailed incorrectly because of the limited gender identities available:

Extract 9:

Bob: -it's-it's very weird because I-I find it the other, I can't drop my guard and try to behave not masculine, because then people immediately question that. They're like 'why are you-why are you being so soft?' you know. […] And it's-it's weird because then people start getting agitated because I am behaving in a way they didn't expect me to… yeah… but then I can imagine, as soon as I start, looking more feminine to go with, eh, behaving more feminine, then it becomes-I'm expec-fully expecting it to become more aggressive.

Dan: It will probably become 'why aren't you more feminine?'-

Bob: -yeah, yeah-

[*Later in the conversation*]

Bob: -[...] Like I can imagine like it's uhm, because I'm not, because I'm non-binary as well and I don't want to go hundred percent to the full stereotype of femininity, like, if there was eh, eh, eh, sort of crop that I could pick to look like. Being able to am-describe it in terms of female or male it would sort of be like butch lesbian, sort of thing. But eh, the-the problem with me trying to aim for that is that I can see myself never

falling off the cusp of being masculine, and remaining looking too masculine and being continued to be treated as a man. Yeah. And being on the edge by where I – half the people are telling me 'you should behave more feminine' and half people are telling me 'you should behave more masculine' and that's it, that's my life [laughs]

Patt: Lad culture doesn't leave a lot of room for nuanced identities.

(Meeting 2, 30th March 2017)

Above, Bob exposed the problems they face presenting as a trans non-binary person. Firstly, Bob highlighted people's resistance when they attempted to distance themselves from performing masculinity. As a result, they recounted being questioned for not living up to the social expectations of masculinity – a disidentification that needed to be managed to avoid confrontation. As Muñoz (1999) states, disidentification as a resistance strategy cannot be adequate at all times, as in order to ensure survival in dangerous environments, sometimes it is better to comply to conventional patterns of behaviour. Bob also identified a point of inflexion in their gender presentation and people's reaction to it: they explained they expected more aggression when adopting a more feminine aesthetic/behaviour, therefore underlining the violence trans non-binary people anticipate and suffer during their transition (Wirtz et al. 2018). However, as Bob's discussion suggested, this expected violence, transphobia and trans-misogyny was shaped by the impossibilities trans women face in embodying a successful feminine identity. Bob, for example, starts by highlighting tensions of in/authenticity in performing their identity when they "*can't drop my guard*". To enact not 'dropping their guard', Bob's presented their own masculine identity as a performance, an act, and something to monitor and check in order to avoid backlash.

Bob's worry over the societal expectations of their gender identity was further reflected in the second part of the extract. Describing themselves as non-binary, Bob's talk pointed to how both their identity and presentation existed in disidentification from masculinity and femininity, inasmuch as they failed to be interpellated by either. In this failing, Bob's identity emerged in disidentification, reworking ideas and practices associated to masculinity and/or femininity, to construct their own identity that worked within and against the cultural gender norms. Aiming to be a "*butch lesbian*", which I argue is in itself a stereotype, rather than traditionally feminine or masculine, Bob's identity challenges normative socio-cultural ideals of gender presentation. However, this position in disidentification can be met with social hostility. Bob explained how, because of their conventionally perceived masculine

appearance[26], they expected to never be able to escape masculinity. Escaping conventional gender archetypes proved even more difficult for Bob due to their non-binary identity. Presenting as non-binary through their disidentification from masculine/feminine might lead to misrecognition from society. Garrison (2018) argues, in attempting to "opt out of gender performance" (617), presenting as non-binary may sabotage the original intention, as others will assign the person with the gender they perceive as the closest. This last point is reflected in Patt's comment where she highlighted the obstacles non-binary and trans people face within the heterosexist and gender normative lad culture: "*Lad culture doesn't leave a lot of room for nuanced identities*".

Bob's expectation to be misrecognised and Patt's comment on the lack of nuance within lad culture could be understood through the notion of 'compulsory heterogenderism' as developed by Nicolazzo (2017). Nicolazzo (2017) draws on the concept of 'compulsory heterosexuality' developed by Rich (1980), referring to the process through which heterosexual relationships are legitimised and naturalised at the expense of lesbian relationships, which are rendered as "less than 'natural' phenomenon" (632), and therefore denigrated. Building on this idea, Butler (1990) establishes a link between compulsory heterosexuality and gender identity. Butler (1990) questions to what level gender identity is the effect of regulatory techniques and practices of compulsory heterosexuality. Butler interprets this as a 'heterosexual matrix' which renders non-normative ways of doing gender as unintelligible. From this theoretical framework, Nicolazzo (2017) develops the concept of compulsory heterogenderism, describing how diverse gender identities are rendered unintelligible (247). Despite the particular focus on gender identity, compulsory heterogenderism also pays attention to how sexualities are used to hinder trans identities (for example, identifying as a trans man but having this identification erased by other's assumption of lesbian sexuality).

The idea of compulsory heterogenderism could be a way to interpret Bob and Patt's talk regarding the problems faced by people with "*nuanced identities*" within lad culture. It could be argued that lad culture, in reproducing the hierarchical aspiration to hegemonic masculinity, also takes part in establishing compulsory heterogenderism. Lad culture legitimises one form of masculinity (largely white, heterosexual and traditionally masculine) through the

[26] At the time of this meeting, Bob had a beard and had openly talked about looking masculine that day.

denigration of the others seen as subordinate (non-white, non-heterosexual, effeminate). As a result, this leads some gender identities to be rendered as unintelligible and abject. The legitimisation of some gender identities over others also works to position heterosexual cis-gendered relationships as desirable and accepted, while simultaneously interpreting alternative relationships (homosexual, or formed by people with diverse gender identity) as unintelligible. Consequently, compulsory heterogenderism appears to be worked through and reproduced by lad culture, meaning *"nuanced identities"* such as Bob's, are in constant tension.

Discussions about the obstacles trans and/or non-binary people have to manage in order to construct their identities led to further conversations where other participants also shared their experiences in how their gender or sexuality came into conflict with lad culture. Kim, a member of the group who identified as cis-lesbian, recounted how she made sense of her subjectivity as a lesbian within what she described as a very aggressive lad culture. I turn to Kim's discussion of these tensions below.

9.2.2 NAVIGATING LESBIAN IDENTITY

Drawing on personal experiences with lad culture, Kim positioned herself as having to negotiate her lesbian identity. Kim's narrative was underscored by tension and a continuous monitoring of her behaviour, including being rendered a sexual object for male desire and wanting to uncompromisingly acknowledge her sexuality in public. For example, she stated:

Extract 10:

> Kim: I feel like uhm, a lot of the time, if wanted to look and dress the way I wanted to, the way that made me happy, there is an expectation from uhm, people that were lads that I would be a certain way and I'm just, I'm not that way. And uhm, and even though, like I think I've come a long way in feeling like it's fine to be who I am and to like who I like and-and, I think there's still a sense of uhm, be like made to feel like I'm leading them on by dressing in a feminine way so I think I definitely changed that for a lot of years in reaction to that. And uhm, and I was constantly questioning like, wh-what is it about me that's attracting this attention and uh, and what can I do uhm, to change that, so that I feel safe when I go outside.
>
> *(Meeting 3, 30th March 2017)*

In the extract above, Kim engaged in appearance talk and attributed the reasons why she monitored her fashion choices to avoid being approached by men. In her talk, Kim interpreted

dressing feminine as generating "*an expectation*" of heterosexuality and the possibility of being misrecognised as heterosexual. Such an expectation resulted in a certain attention she did not want. Clarke and Turner (2007) explore the equation between perceived feminine clothing and female heterosexuality, analysing the construction of lesbian, gay and bisexual identities through clothing and appearance. The authors identified lesbians who dress feminine as having their lesbian identity erased by being read as heterosexuals (269). This was visible in Kim's narration, which highlighted the dominant cultural view of lesbians as stereotypically and exclusively embodying the 'butch' look.

It is also possible to discern in Kim's talk the discourse of self-responsibilisation. When discussing her fashion choices, Kim expressed concern over what others would interpret by them. She established a connection between feminine clothing and getting attention from the lads. In drawing this relationship, Kim positioned herself as a responsible subject as she argues she is "*made to feel like*" she is "*leading them on*" if she chose to dress more conventionally feminine. In doing this, Kim articulated the rape myth of women's appearance as causing aggression. In this sense, Kim's comment evoked broader feminist discussions such as the SlutWalks, an international movement whose aim was to disrupt the normalising of sexual violence and the sexualisation of women, often making a stand through clothing, as means to reclaim women's right to dress whatever they want without being responsibilised for male aggression (Ringrose and Renold 2012). Even though Kim recounted taking part in this self-responsibilising, her choice of words ("*made to feel like*") suggests a denunciation of current victim-blaming discourses that attempt to hold women accountable for the violence they suffer, particularly in relation to dress (Moor 2010; Gavey 2005). To avoid this, Kim discussed engaging in a strict surveillance of her behaviour that would enable her to "*feel safe when I go outside*", therefore pointing to the difference in her identity when in public/private spaces. Thus, the way of dressing that she argued would make her happy ("*if wanted to look and dress the way I wanted to, the way that made me happy*") was presented as unavailable, given the risk of being misrecognised as heterosexual and hence, getting male attention. It was therefore against this risk that Kim constructed her identity.

Kim's navigation of lad culture as a lesbian not only involved a careful consideration of fashion choices, but also a strict control of the behaviour that would present her as openly lesbian. In talking about previous relationships, she suggested that:

Extract 11:

Kim: Yeah, I feel like every relationship I've ever had, uhm, I'm a lesbian and so, I-I've only been with women, and every relationship I've ever had, at some point, it's been undermined or verbally trashed by someone wo I'd put in this category, and fetishized and made fun of. And uhm, like, we-we couldn't sit somewhere-I mean I'm not currently in a relationship and I don't plan to be, but some time, not because of this, but just, it's probably a factor and uhm, it's really difficult to go out with someone and you're trying to you're trying to kind of ehm, be intimate with them and, on a level with them, but you can't go out without someone saying 'well, which one of you wears the strap-on?' And like, eh, things like that, 'I'd love to watch you guys mud wrestle' or like-what-other people don't go on dates, and you're kind of holding their hand for the first time and it's sweet and it's supposed to be lovely and then some dick sees you walking to the shopping centre and decides to follow you and shout abuse at you. Uhm, and like, 'you don't know what you're missing' like 'can I join you' like, nobody wants to hear that, straight couples wouldn't wanna hear that, you know, I-I think most men if they hav-if they were there with their girlfriend and some guys started following them and saying 'I'd like to come home with you' I think that they'd end up in a huge fight. And them, yeah, I think it's a really disgusting culture and uhm, it's unfortunate that it's developed and I definitely don't feel comfortable flaunting my relationships that I should be proud of and-and happy about in public, because ehm, it's ehm, it's like an idealised porno fantasy o-of really immature people and, for two women to be together and for me it's not a joke, it's the-it's the only way I can think to be romantically happy.

(Meeting 2, 30th March 2017)

In this extract, Kim exposed the multiple and affective difficulties she faced as a lesbian woman openly engaging in a romantic relationship in the context of lad culture, and more generally within dominant heterosexual societies. Kim denounced having had her relationship "*undermined or verbally trashed*" by men, and gave a detailed account of several abusive comments she had received as a result of being in public with her female partner. From sexualised comments (i.e. "*I'd love to watch you guys mud wrestle*") to predatory behaviour (i.e. being followed and shouted at), Kim identified lesbian women's abuse, mistreatment and fetishization at the hands of heterosexual men. Kim's retelling of verbal abuse highlighted the fetishizing of lesbian relationships and its appropriation through the male gaze (Fahs 2009) which renders them as culturally delegitimised, and turns them into a pleasurable object for male consumption (Fahs 2009; Puhl 2010; Diamond 2005). The risks of such open relationships and violence has more recently been well documented in the media, with the attack of two women in a London bus (Noor and Busby 2019). The two women, who were in a relationship, were on a bus in central London when they were violently attacked by a group

of young men for refusing to kiss upon their demand, leaving them with several facial injuries, evidencing the levels of aggression lesbian women like Kim face within heteronormative cultures.

Heteronormativity refers to the practices that reinforce, reproduce and normalise the prevailing heterosexual code for sexuality while excluding and oppressing LGBTQIA+ people (Warner 1991). As discussed previously, Rich's (1980) account of lesbian experiences argues that the belief that women are inherently sexually attracted to men leads to the two-fold policing of lesbians as disrupting gender and sexual norms both in regards to infringing heterosexual coupling and women's apparent inherent dependency on men (Marchia and Sommer 2017). In this sense, heteronormativity works to root patriarchal ideals in society by denying and erasing women's sexuality in an attempt to further subjugate them (Rich 1980). Demonstrating this in mainstream media, Puhl (2010) argues that lesbian sex and relationships are often seen as a foreplay to heterosexual engagement. This works to locate lesbian relationships within a strict heteronormative and postfeminist frame, where lesbians are constructed "packaged within heterosexual norms of attractiveness" following a postfeminist sexualisation of women that presents them as simultaneously agentic and readily sexually available for men's desire (Gill 2008: 50). This is reflected in Kim's talk above. Kim's experience and identity as a young lesbian woman are discursively positioned as an object of consumption for male desire, which commodifies her sexuality and makes it somewhat fallacious. To emphasize how her lesbian identity was perceived by men, Kim drew a comparison between how the abusive situation would change would it be directed against a heterosexual couple, concluding it would "*end up in a huge fight*".

Towards the end of the extract, Kim used deeply affective terms to make sense of herself, identifying her lesbian identity as the only way she "*can think to be romantically happy*". Kim's discussions of lad culture seemed to be structured by aggression, intimidation and mockery. As a result, Kim positioned her lesbian identity as deeply challenged by lad culture. This challenge was, in turn, underpinned by an intense affectivity that she was also required to handle. For example, drawing on the extract, she discussed having to negotiate whether or not to engage in romantic relationships publicly in order to cope with laddish abuse and ensure her safety.

Discussing the implications that identifying as LGBTQIA+ involve within the potentially hostile environment of lad culture, the group was able to identify several things they believed sat at the centre of the problem. For example, toxic masculinity delineating the possible field of action of masculinity, heteronormativity as framing gender relations and a culture of complicity with misogyny, homophobia and transphobia. As a result of these conversations, the participants started to outline some suggestions that could help decrease laddish presence on campus and contribute towards a friendlier LGBTQIA+ environment.

9.3 STOPPING LAD CULTURE

The participants constructed the erasing of lad culture from University campuses specifically, and society in general, as a crucial in order to present their sexuality, gender identity and expression without experiencing violence and harassment. For one of the participants in particular, eliminating lad culture would have a direct impact not only on his identity, but also on his overall sense of safety. In responding to a lack of safety, Dan stated that:

Extract 12:

> Dan: I get very scared. And I wish I wasn't, because I get scared even when people misgender me, I can't tell them that is a different thing, and it's because I worry that they'll punch me or… worse, so. I think there's a difference between-I think I react either by fear or anger, and anger I can deal with, because anger means I can confront them and then let it pass, and go on with my day but, if it's to do with my transness, and that's why they're acting the way they are, it's fear and I can't do anything about it. And that's why lad culture is like, the worst, because it genuinely makes me fear for my life.
>
> *(Meeting 3, 6th April 2017)*

Above, Dan explained the affective consequences lad culture had for him, making him "*scared*". Being misgendered was understood as something to be fearful of, since it might entail negative or even violent consequences. Nordmarken (2014) classifies misgendering as a specific type of microaggression directed against trans or non-conforming people. Nordmarken (2014) argues the act of misgendering occurrs due to people's projection of their beliefs and gender expectations onto trans people, therefore dismissing their own interpretation of themselves (Serrano 2007). Being misgendered has been linked to increased perceived social and self-stigma and mental health related problems suffered by trans people (McLemore 2018). Dan positioned himself as able to deal with anger, since it allowed him to "*let it pass*" and

move on. However, such are the effects of misgendering on trans people's mental health, Dan described situations where he was simply unable to cope due to fear. In his talk, Dan located these misgendering microaggressions within the context of lad culture, which he described as the main source of fear: "*it genuinely makes me fear for my life*".

Given the affective tone of Dan's account of fear, where one's life might be at risk, the participants started to identify ways in which lad culture could be tackled. As I document below, first, the participants emphasised, like other groups in this research, the significant relevance of education, and especially of educating people in LGBTQIA+ issues as a way to reduce discrimination, homophobic and transphobic practices found in lad culture. Second, they stressed the importance of challenging the ideas of masculinity and what it means to be a man.

9.3.1 DECONSTRUCTING/EDUCATING LAD CULTURE

In looking for tactics that could potentially challenge lad culture, the participants engaged in a discussion that centred the role of education in either promoting problematic and laddish behaviours, or tackling it. Based on their previous conversation on teachers' complicity with lad culture, the group identified the potential of both the education system and teachers in educating in equality, hence advocating for healthier relationships free of violence and discrimination. In part of this discussion, the participants identified the role of normalisation:

Extract 13:

Patt:	[…] making sure that teachers are able to monitor the behaviour in very young children and encourage it from a really young age and having a, say, I think it's California just made it eh, a legal requirement for schools to have LGBT history-
Tom:	-yeah-
Silvia:	-yeah, I read that.
Patt:	And, yeah, and they have really good eh, so they learn a little bit of one age and then more and more as they go on and it means that from a young age there's this generation of kids in that area that are gonna know more about the history, know more about what it's like, and-
[…]	
Dan:	-just normalising it-
Patt:	-yeah, normalising it.

(Meeting 3, 6th April 2017)

In this extract, Patt emphasized the role of teachers in reducing discrimination through monitoring specific behaviours in children. She also highlighted the importance of education and learning about LGBT issues at school as a good method not only to instruct children in LGBT rights, but also as an appropriate approach to start normalising diverse sexual and gender identities. Patt's comments reflected a wider on-going debate regarding the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ issues in the curriculum. Recently, Scotland made history by becoming the first country in the world to incorporate LGBTI teaching in their school curriculum (Brooks 2018). This was prompted by recommendations made as part of the educational campaign by the Scottish charity 'Time for Inclusive Education' (TIE). The new curriculum's goal is to tackle homophobia and transphobia and offer an exploration of LGBTI identities (Brooks 2018), therefore normalising the diversity and plurality of identities from a young age. This sits in opposition to the situation of teaching in LGBT issues in Birmingham schools (BBC 2019). As part of 'The No Outsiders project', some schools in Birmingham started to incorporate LBGT issues in their lessons in a move towards inclusivity. This was met with resistance from some parents and individuals, in some cases escalating to attacks where the police had to get involved (Ferguson 2019). The situation in a particular school, Anderton Park primary school, escalated to the point where anti-LGBT protestors have been banned from school grounds following a high court injunction (Parveen 2019).

In discussing the crucial role education can play with regards to increasing or decreasing homophobic attitudes in society, Dan, also argued for the capacity of education to pass on skills in empathy, which in turn could erase problematic and prejudicial attitudes such as the ones reproduced by lad culture. When discussing the improvements needed, Dan proposed a particular way to accelerate the process.

Extract 14:

Dan:	-yeah, there's still so much improvements that we should make and like going forward to stop pe-people because it's just they-they're uneducated, that's how I see it. Because if people actually knew what it is like to be a minority, they wouldn't-they wouldn't act the way they act. I feel like they should live in our shoes for a little bit.
Silvia:	Yeah, definitely-
Dan:	-that would be a way to fix them, make them-make them have to deal with lad culture from the opposite side.

(Meeting 3, 6th April 2017)

Above, Dan drew a fictitious strategy to stop lad culture based on making the lads experience life from the point of view of a minority, such as the LGBTQIA+. Dan grounded this tactic on empathy, as he argued it was people's ignorance about the experiences of minorities which enabled the reproduction of discriminatory practices. In doing so, Dan constructed lads as in need of fixing through being forced to navigate the hostility of lad culture from a marginal position. For Dan, this strategy would be successful as lads would be compelled into living these negative experiences, therefore potentially rejecting their problematic behaviour as a result in the future. Additionally, the group considered several strategies they believed could have an impact on eliminating lad culture from University campuses. The idea of stopping lad culture by deconstructing masculinity, for example, was presented by members of the group during a group activity where I asked the participants to write down a particular strategy they believed could successfully tackle lad culture. One participant, Tom, wrote "*destroy gender roles*" and "*fight it*" as part of his strategy, a call to arms to erase gender normativity and gendered ways of being.

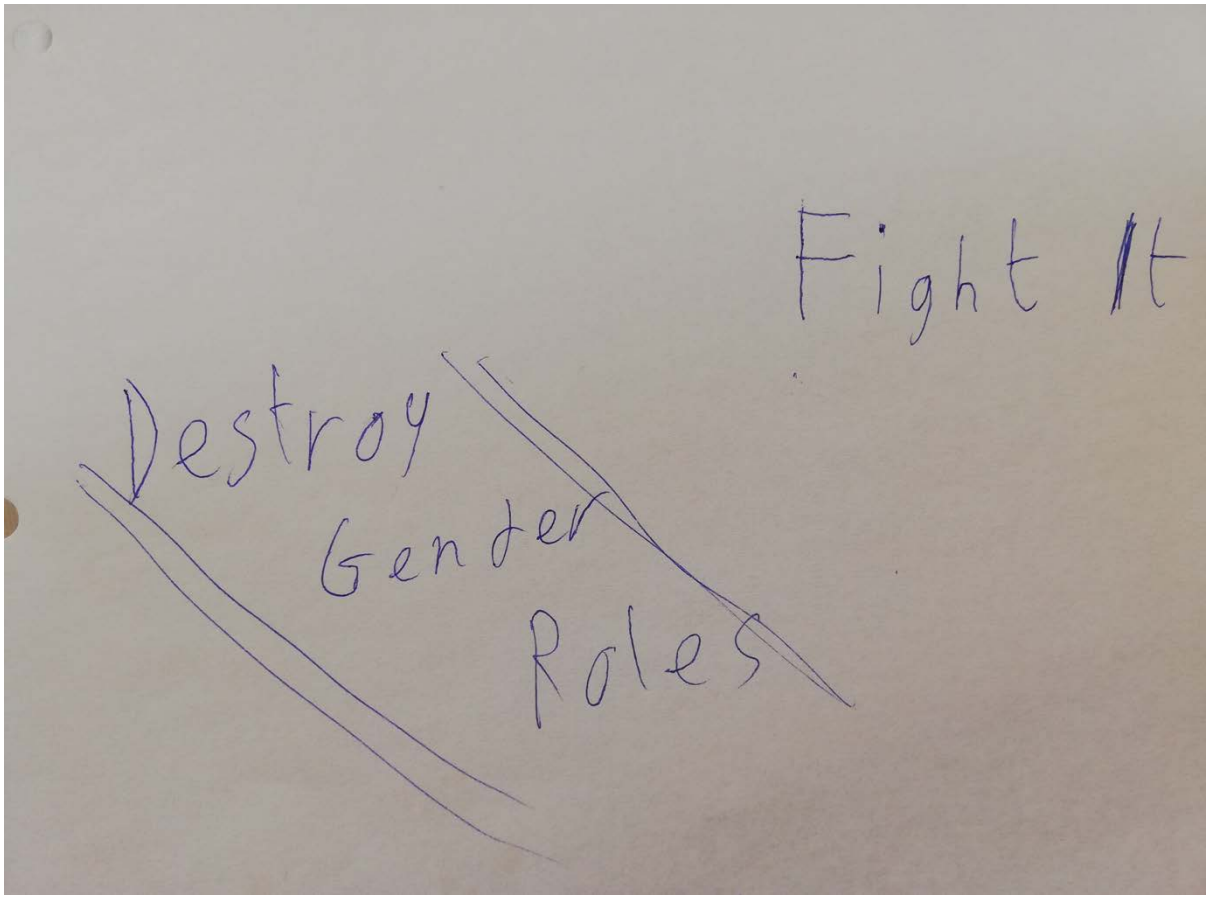

Figure 3

(Image drawn by Tom, group 3, meeting 3, 6th April 2017)

Following this line of thought, Bob stressed the importance of deconstructing lad culture as a template for masculinity in any approach developed to challenge lad culture on University campuses:

Extract 15:

Bob:	And I think the other half of it would be that you have to disassociate it with from masculinity because it-it-if you try to preach-
Patt:	-having more positive examples of masculinity.
Bob:	Yeah, because if you try to preach anti-lad culture, people as well would say 'well, you're being ant-anti man.
Jack:	Yeah.
Dan:	It's very hard to take them as two separate things.
Bob:	-yeah-
Dan:	-it's very hard-
Jack:	A lot of people don't understand difference.
Dan:	Yeah. Uhm, lots of people see them as the same thing, whereas, although lad culture is about masculinity, it isn't the only thing that defines masculinity-
Jack:	-it's not the true definition-
Bob:	-it's about toxic masculinity.

(Meeting 3, 6th April 2017)

In the above extract, the group – and in particular Bob – argued for disassociating lad culture from masculinity to successfully eliminate it. However, Bob also recognised that attempts to deconstruct masculinity in this way might have negative consequences, such as being perceived as being anti-man. Bob's comments could be linked to Men Right's discourses about alleged anti-men attitudes underscoring equality movements (Ging 2017), such as those beliefs that have been reflected in current debates around Gillette's recent advertisement 'The best man can be'. Since the release of the advertisement, Gillette has been labelled as anti-men for promoting a non-hegemonic version of masculinity (Bishop 2019). Current mediated articulations of anti-men discourses were also associated to lad culture by some of the participants [see figure 4]. In figure 4, the lad depicted is wearing a shirt with the hashtag #NotAllMen. #NotAllMen is an internet meme used by men to challenge a perception that feminist claims overgeneralise male behaviour. The #NotAllMen expression has been co-opted by online feminist activist in a mocking fashion in order to respond to men's resistance to threats to masculinity and conversations on sexual assault and targeted attacks on women such as the Isla Vista killings, perpetrated by self-proclaimed incel Elliot Rodger (BBCa 2018).

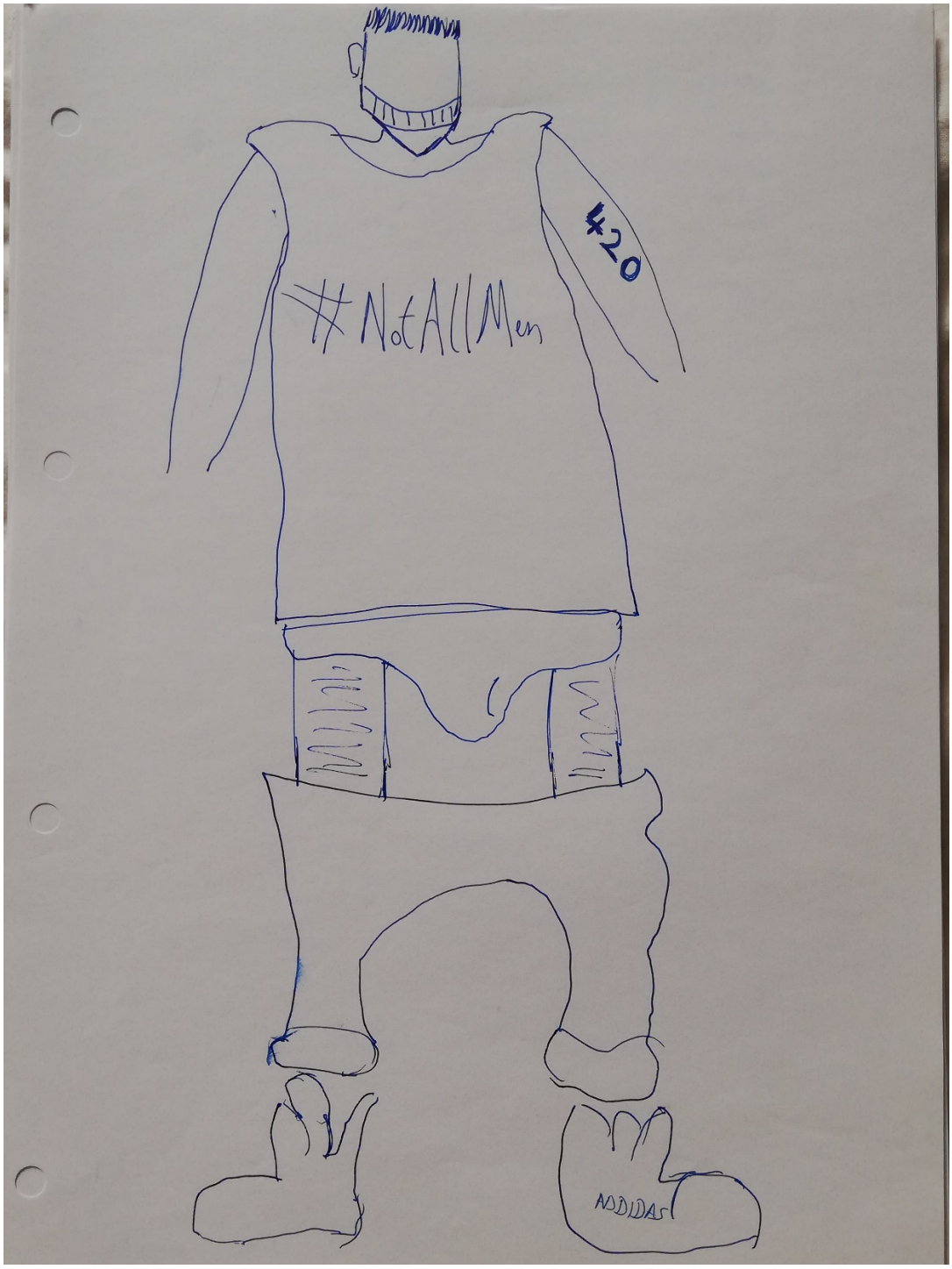

Figure 4

(Image drawn by Bob, group 3, meeting 1, 24th March 2017)

In their drawings, the participants made further echo of lad culture's overlapping with anti-feminist digital gender politics, inasmuch as they also depicted a lad wearing a hoodie with the hashtag #Meninist [see figure 5]. The term "meninist" is used to describe the ways men believe they are victimised by feminist politics. The hashtag #meninist emerged from Twitter, with men using it to share jokes mocking feminist activism in general, but particularly oriented

towards women's sexualisation and unrealistic beauty standards (Zand 2013). After going viral, clothing with the hashtag #Meninist were produced and sold among men who believed in their victimisation at the hands of feminism (Warren 2015).

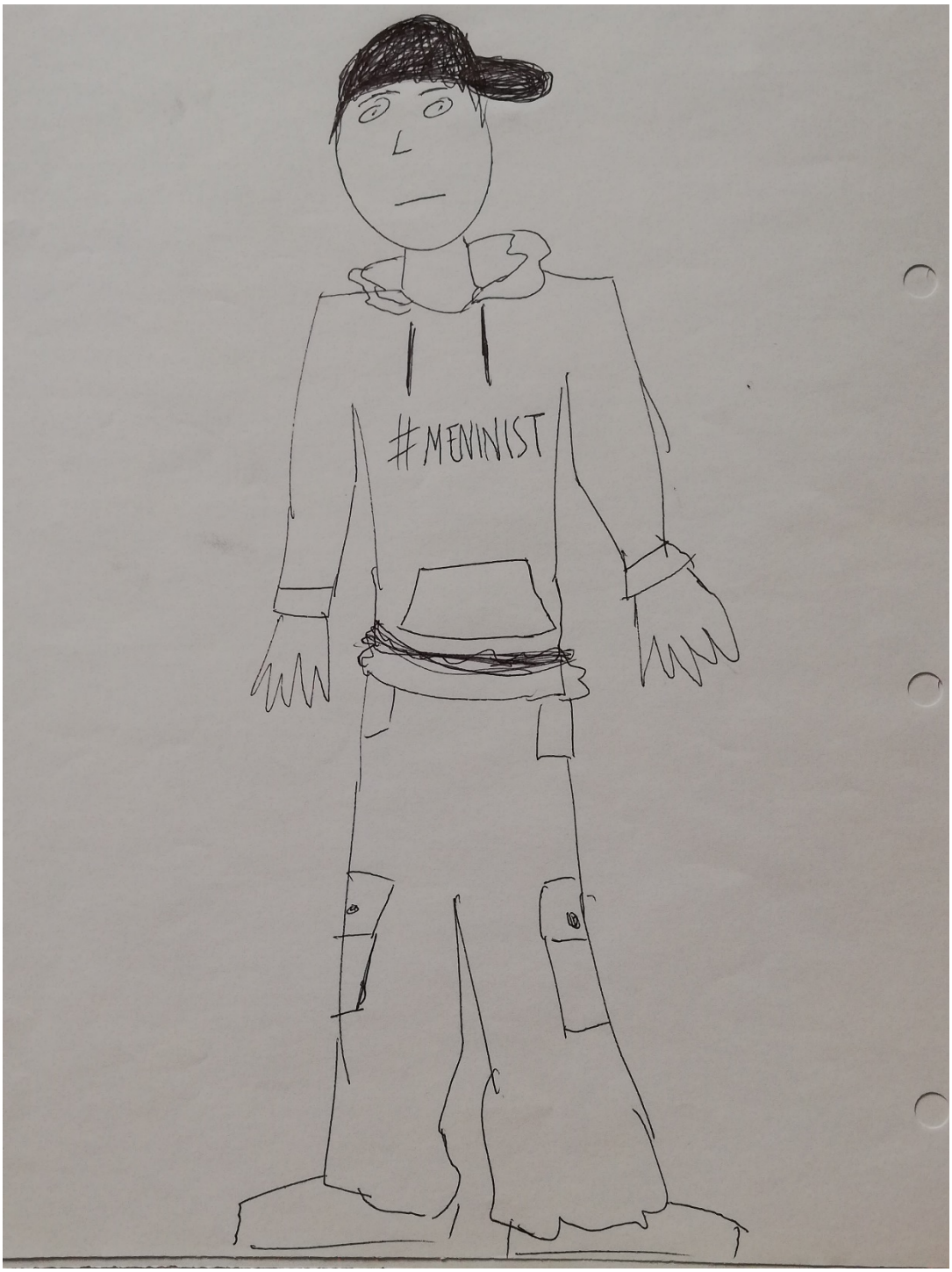

Figure 5

(Image drawn by Dan, group 3, meeting 1, 24th March 2017)

These drawings point to the overlaying of laddish articulations of masculinity with anti-feminist digital politics. The interpretations of lad culture as closely related to online

masculinist cultures could be read as signalling the sharing of their ideological frame. Even though I would not consider the existence of distinct laddish politics, it seems the students see lad culture as interacting with digital masculinist discourses. However, it is also pertinent to note both hashtags #NotAllMen and #Meninist have been critiqued and turned into an online joke, hence lads' seeming interaction with them could also be read through the frame of non-lad banter. In any case, it could be argued the participants' alignment of lad culture with digital masculinist politics indicates the possibility of lad culture acting as a gateway to more extreme hegemonic and toxic masculinist cultures, as argued in Chapter 2.

In relation to the extract, the participants' talk highlight how the continuous association of doing masculinity with hegemonic masculinity makes it almost impossible to differentiate between the two. However, Dan also argued against the conceptualization of laddish masculinity as the only intelligible definition for masculinity. Thus, in the end, Bob located lad culture through the label of toxic masculinity, therefore placing this distinction as the beginning for the deconstruction of laddish masculinity.

9.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have explored the discursive-affective fabric of lad culture as described by members of a LGBTQIA+ University society in three ways. In the first section of the chapter, I argued that the participants' construction of themselves as knowers of lad culture allowed them to explore it from three different angles. These angles were: first, a reading of lads through class, both middle and working, which resulted in a psychologisation of lads' position (i.e. as coping mechanism); second, an exploration of lads as supported by a system of complicity, particularly by school teachers, which I analysed through Connell's concept of 'complicit masculinities'; and third, an understanding of laddish behaviours as being taken up by gay men in the community, which I examined through the ideas of 'heterosexism' and 'anti-effeminacy'.

Second, I explored the group's negotiation of their LGBTQIA+ identities within a hostile lad culture. I particularly focused on the experiences of Dan, a trans man, Bob, a trans non-binary person, and Kim, a cis-lesbian. For Dan, masculinity appeared as an impossible identity to perform, inasmuch as he rejected laddish articulations of masculinity, which simultaneously act as the hegemonic template of masculinity for British young men, therefore problematising his own performance of masculinity. In the case of Bob, being trans non-binary, not presenting

in a way that neatly fits either femininity or masculinity, makes them stand in a position of in-betweenness. Working through Muñoz's concept of disidentification, I argued both Dan and Bob's identities failed to be interpellated by traditional understandings of masculine and feminine, as they construct their own trans and non-binary identities working within and against the cultural norms of gender. With regards to Kim, I explored her navigation of lad culture as a cis-lesbian, where she had to engage in a constant self-monitoring in order to avoid retaliation and/or fetishist sexualisation from men. I argue that in these three cases, the participants, due to their non-heteronormative identities, were misrecognised in the heterosexist context of lad culture, in which LGBTQIA+ negotiations of lad culture are underpinned by excess; by an affective frame that shapes their sense-making of both lad culture and themselves.

In the final section of this chapter, I looked at the group's suggestions for challenging lad culture in university campuses. The participants discussed the advantages educating in LGBTQIA+ issues at school levels would have in decreasing homophobia, transphobia, and consequently, laddish cultures from society. In addition, other participants called for the destruction of gender roles and the deconstruction of laddish masculinity as the sole template for masculinity, to allow for more positive versions of it to flourish and be rendered intelligible. Their desire to deconstruct laddish masculinity, I argue, was also motivated by the longing to tear down a system of hegemony based on a compulsory heterogenderism that renders LGBTQIA+ identities as invalid and incomprehensible. In this sense, lad culture appears as producing a deeply affective, hostile and impossible environment to inhabit, yet always possible to resist and fight.

Chapter 10: In Conclusion…

This thesis, I argue, has been concerned with developing a theoretical account that has achieved three main outcomes. In this research I have 1) developed a feminist affective methodology that has 2) engaged with the difficult concept of affect, bringing attention to the affective fabric of lad culture to understand the everyday experiences of misogyny, sexism, homophobia and racism as shaped by affective relations; and 3) developed an account of agency as shaped by affect and distributed in a spectrum of agentic capacities.

In doing this, the thesis has explored the multiplicity of ways lad culture is made sense of by different groups of students. In this sense, the thesis troubles the dichotomised understanding of lad culture that positions the men that participate in it as active 'doers', and the rest of student body as inactive 'victims'. To do this, and forming the first objective of this research, I have brought forward an affective account of lad culture that highlights the role affect plays in the reproduction of gendered hierarchical power relations. Academic work on lad culture is quickly becoming a field of its own, with diverse and rich literature. However, I have argued in the thesis that an account of what lad culture feels like for the students is missing in this work. To address this gap, I explore the affective dimensions of lad culture to provide novel understanding of the new ways gender relations and sexism interact within the context of Higher Education. Such an exploration begs the question of how to theorise affect without collapsing it on either its discursivity or virtuality. In this research, I have suggested 'meeting affect halfway' (Barad 2007), considering its potentiality but also its continuous relationship with the contextual (Wetherell 2012). I also explored lad culture's socio-cultural context and its ties with postfeminism and neoliberalism, therefore outlining crucial concepts that, I argue, form the foundations of the reproduction of current laddish behaviours.

In this thesis, I have understood neoliberalism as a political rationality that has expanded to different areas of life, creating a form of governance based on a logic that constitutes subjects as autonomous, enterprising, responsible and self-managing (Gill and Scharff 2011). I have defined postfeminism as a gendered form of neoliberalism, constructing women as empowered, liberated and autonomous subjects who enact their 'freedom' through specific forms of consumption due to their position as crucial agents in worldwide economies (McRobbie 2009; Harris 2004). I argued the intersection of both neoliberalism and postfeminism is connected to

lad culture, inasmuch as laddish behaviours and masculinities are underpinned by notions of competitiveness and a re-emergence of neoconservative values regarding sex, relationships, gender and sexuality. I argued the interrelatedness of these concepts is crucial in understanding students' construction of subjectivity in relation to lad culture in the current cultural context.

My account of affect in the thesis is also a feminist one, which enabled me to explore the ways affect shaped the students' subjectivity contextually, and the moments in which it opened up negotiations of feminist agentic capacities (Coole 2005). Concurrent with this concept of affect, a second objective in this thesis has been to develop an account of agency that is not underpinned by neoliberal and postfeminist articulations of choice. In moving beyond a dichotomised understanding that views agency as something some have and some do not (Mohanty 1988), I see agency as intersubjective. This view of agency has allowed me to map it as distributed in a spectrum of agentic capacities, between situations, negotiations and spaces.

The third aim of the thesis has been to develop a feminist affective methodology that paid attention to issues of representation, and which enabled me to attempt to de-centre my power as a researcher. For this, I have situated myself within the overall project and consequently, I have addressed my knowledge as both partial and situated (Lather 2007). I have employed the participatory method of data collection called 'cooperative inquiry' to attempt to disrupt the boundaries between researcher/researched, therefore creating a research practice based on more equal and just relationships (Fine 2016). In developing a feminist methodology, I have also paid crucial attention to intersectionality. Previous research in the field has tended to explore the lived experiences of white, heterosexual British male and female students. This work offers a relevant starting point to build on research by paying attention to the different intersections of institutional structural oppression (e.g. race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality, gender identity) in relation to lad culture. As a result, in the thesis, I introduced an intersectional approach, illuminating the accounts of students from diverse backgrounds.

In the following concluding remarks, I come back to the research questions that have structured the thesis and guided the research process. These were: what does it feel like to live in a University environment characterised by misogyny, sexism, racism and homophobia? What are the ways in which the affective dimensions of lad culture inform and shape Higher Education students' subjectivity? How do students come to enact agency and negotiate their position within the affective context of lad culture? And how do spaces shape both the

reproduction of lad culture and the ways in which it is experienced by the students? I start addressing these questions by summarising my research findings. I argue for an approach to the study of lad culture that methodologically documents how it shapes students' affective construction of subjectivity, paying attention to their negotiations of agency within a neoliberal and postfeminist socio-cultural context. Below, I highlight the implications of my research particularly focusing on the ways neoliberalism is currently shaping student life, welfare and wellbeing of female, LGBTQIA+ and non-binary students in HE.

10.1 IMPLICATIONS: WHY IT MATTERS

As argued throughout the thesis, neoliberalism, understood as a life and political rationality, is shaping the current landscape of UK HE. Across the chapters, I have discussed and underlined the different ways neoliberal logic frames the reproduction of lad culture in British universities: from how they (fail to) address student reports on sexual assault, the heightened and sexualised competitive underpinnings of lad culture, to the ways the students respond to potentially hostile environments while on night socials. With regards to the first point, and as discussed in Chapter 7, universities responses to reports of sexual harassment are shaped by market-driven rationalities that prioritise the institution's reputation over students' safety. Despite this, universities across the country have been tightening their apparent engagement with anti-bullying policies and dignity campaigns (i.e. see for example, the initiatives developed by The University of Edinburgh [2019] and The University of Nottingham [2019]).

Even though these strategies are well-intentioned and could be viewed as universities taking a first step into tackling the problem, Sims-Schouten and Edwards (2016) argue tactics such as these are still rooted in neoliberal logic and resilience theory. Sims-Schouten and Edwards (2016) explain resilience theory as the adaptability of a person to adversity or trauma. In light of this, they argue universities' anti-bullying and anti-harassment initiatives require students themselves to become resilient to the abuse they face. This, Sims-Schouten and Edwards (2016) explain, emphasise the individual responsibility of students in responding to structural problems such as misogyny, racism and homophobia, where students' well-being is viewed as resting "on individual choice and responsibility, with individuals being 'empowered' to look after themselves" (1383).

The imperative to be resilient is also pertinent with regards to the second and third points listed in the above paragraph, concerning sexualized laddish competition and students' responses to hostile laddish environments. The participants' navigation of sticky atmospheres was done through developing diverse strategies that ensured their safety while negotiating their own agency facing the potentially hostile lads. In doing this, they rework and take up dominant discourses of gender that disrupt traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. However, this is always within the limits of power, as standing up to power is always carried out in relation to it (Foucault 1982).

Consequently, we see the participants engaging simultaneously in resisting and reproducing lad culture in complex and multiple ways. For example, as we saw in Chapter 7, female identifying students ensured their safety within nighttime spaces such as clubs by engaging in diverse tactics (from using physical force to moving around the space) in order to escape unwanted attention from lads. Concerning male identifying participants, the way they disrupted traditional notions of masculinity was done by rendering laddish hegemonic masculinity as negative and possibly harmful to the student body and, consequently, to men themselves too. This also helped them while negotiating their non-lad identity, therefore rejecting the almost compulsory laddish template of masculinity. Considering all of this, it is possible to see this research sheds light onto the different ramifications of neoliberalism in HE, the structural problems it reproduces (e.g. misogyny, sexism, hegemonic masculinity), and how it requires the development of individual responses to deal with them.

Thinking of this research in a practical way in order to identify ways of moving forwards in HE with regards to lad culture is rather complex. I argue, lad culture will not be successfully tackled until the culture that allows and encourages sexism, misogyny, homophobia and racism is radically changed. Until the culture that reproduces an aggressive neoliberal logic of individualism and personal responsibility is not dealt with. Of course, this is an easy thing to say: the culture needs to change. But what would this change look like at the micro level? Could any significant change be implemented locally?

I remain sceptical in providing a set of measures that could be implemented to tackle lad culture as I consider any action taken at the university level would act as a sticky plaster on a structural problem. However, as a feminist researcher, I strive to contribute to feminist practice and activism to fight against misogyny, homophobia, sexism and racism on university campuses.

In this light, I ask: how do we stop responsibilising women, BAME and LGBTQIA+ students for their safety on campuses? How do we make these accounts of how it feels like to experience discrimination and harassment more heard and taken seriously? To answer these questions, I suggest three possible ways in which we can continue challenging lad culture at universities:

- First, through the implementation of workshops on sexuality and sex through Freshers week, as it is the week where new students first come into contact with campus culture and start socialising, drinking and partying. These workshops would be sex-positive, pleasure-positive, yet actively anti-sexist (Ringrose 2013) and their main goal would be to help students navigate the complex sexual cultures at university, providing tools to deconstruct the postfeminist discourses with regards to sex that currently shape university students' private lives.

- Second, following the workshops, to put into practice a compulsory module on feminism and equality across all the different levels of undergraduate degrees. This module would be of reduced hours, running for half of one of the semesters of the academic year. This would need to be undertaken in a way that, first, does not to add to the hours of current lecturers who have seen their workload rise exponentially in recent years (BBCa 2019), which in this case would directly impact feminist lecturers, and, second, opens up new posts in gender and feminism for early career researchers that that are looking to get in academia. Running this module for half of one semester during each of the 3 years of undergraduate degrees would allow students to gain crucial knowledge on feminism and equality without packing their workload and, therefore, would not contribute to the raising levels of students' anxiety (Shackle 2019).

- Third, to ensure investments in mental health professionals who are specialised in dealing with trauma of sexual violence and sexual harassment. Recent complaints brought against Birmingham University highlighted the lack of mental health support for survivors inasmuch as the counsellors available lacked training in these particular areas (Batty 2019). This was also highlighted by several participants in this project. In order to ensure students suffering with these types of trauma receive the support they need, universities must put money into specialised mental health professionals.

The implementation of these measures, while far from erasing the problem of lad culture from British university campuses, do provide a first step towards the tackling of the problem, centring student well-being and safety under the frame of feminism and equality as its core objective.

To bring this thesis to a close, I reflect on two specific elements that speak to the affective fabric that shape lad culture for my participants. I then finish this thesis by pointing to the possible future directions of research on lad culture.

10.2 FEELING LAD CULTURE THROUGH…

In exploring lad culture through affective lenses, lad culture emerged in the thesis as plugged in to a web of emotions and affects that shaped how the students perceived and made sense of it. This affectivity appeared through the participants' retelling of their experiences with the lads, where I highlight two particular aspects that surfaced and, I suggest, configure the affective dimensions of lad culture. First, I look at how spatial elements shaped the reproduction of lad culture and students' affective experiences; and second, I explore the ways affect shaped how the students took up identity politics in their talk.

10.2.1 SPATIALISING LAD CULTURE

The approach to affect I have employed in this thesis has enabled me to identify space as central in the discussions of lad culture. Seeing affect as plugged in to the contextual made possible to account for how the spatial organisation of lad culture shapes its reproduction, the affective relations it generates, and the ways it is made sense of by the students. In this regard, I have developed the idea of 'sticky atmospheres' drawing on Ahmed and Ben Anderson, as a tool to explore how spaces and atmospheres can play a crucial role in how lad culture is felt by the participants. In exploring this, I have highlighted how lad culture is enabled, displayed and underpinned by spatial elements.

The spatiality of lad culture emerged in the discussions as varied: from discussions that circumscribed laddish behaviours within the confines of the nighttime economy (e.g. pubs, clubs), to their location in educational spaces such as libraries and classrooms. In this regard, lad culture appeared as ubiquitous, however, in different degrees as its reproduction was

configured by the space itself. For example, while in nighttime settings, lad culture was presented as more explicit, with situations of assault and harassment recounted by the participants (Chapter 7). In educational surroundings, the articulation of lad culture was done in rather covert ways. For instance, a participant explained how uncomfortable she was made to feel by lads in the library as she could "*feel them staring*" (Chapter 5). Another student shared with the group how she, as a black student in a predominately white school, kept on hearing what she described as "*the whispers*" (Chapter 5). In these discussions, space arose as shaping laddish performances and the participants' experiences with lad culture.

In discussing the shaping of lad culture through its spatial elements, I also explored the particular ways the circulation of affect was influenced by space itself. Affect emerged in the thesis as framing the participants' accounts of their interactions with lad culture, for example, through the language used to describe the event, such as "*horrified*", "*scarred*" and "*frightened*". In addition to this, affect surfaced in these stories as also shaped by the spatial settings where the encounter occurred. The spaces where lad culture was present effected how affect was mobilised, hence influencing the ways lad culture was felt by the students. Spaces within the nighttime economy, as argued previously, were marked as hot for the reproduction of lad culture. In this regard, a high number of stories that were located within these spatial limits were frequently associated with negative emotions of frustration and feeling threatened. In the conversations, this was explained by arguing that certain spaces, depending on the moment of the day, created specific environments that were more prone to encourage laddish behaviours. These specific environments that were produced through space consequently shaped the flow of affect and how it framed the encounters.

For example, in Chapter 7 a participant shared a story about attending a house party where she felt the environment as possibly threatening, as she expressed discomfort at the possibility of being approached by a lad. Facing this possibility, the participant recounted leaving the room where the party was taking place and locking herself up in a different room. In this story, the space of the house party where lads where present was perceived and felt by the student as threatening. In Chapter 5, another participant gave account of avoiding getting sugar to make her tea while in the library café, as the condiment stand seemed to be a space occupied by lads "*hanging around*". Such avoidant behaviour was constructed as essential to see off potentially intimidating and confrontational situations.

Examples such as these were frequent in the discussions, and they evidenced how the spatial framework of encounters with lads underpinned the way affect moved and was felt by the students. Space is, therefore, inextricably linked with affect, and through these stories, the spatial dimensions of affect are highlighted. As previously stated, my approach to affect allowed me to investigate the workings of space within lad culture, and to look at the way spatial structures shaped the circulation of affect itself. This is helpful in feminist research in terms of looking at how spatial-affective environments shape misogyny, racism and homophobia, leaving impressions that stick, and the ways in which it is affectively rationalised by the students (Diaz-Fernandez and Evans 2019b). It also allowed me explore how some affective circulations, in being influenced by space, could open up moments of resistance and agentic capacities.

Space, both in shaping the circulation of affect and the articulation of lad culture, also informed how agency emerged through my participants' discussions. Depending on the spatial-affective settings, the participants engaged in different behaviours to manage lad culture. These behaviours were varied; however, all shared the same goal, to ensure their safety within a potentially hostile environment. The space of the situation emerged as underpinning this. In this regard, clubs and pubs appeared as sites of contestation and confrontation for the participants, where they were able to articulate certain degrees of resistance to lads. The female-identifying participants gave accounts of diverse agentic capacities they engaged with to negotiate their presence in spaces where lad culture's existence was heightened. This included engaging in a direct dispute with the lads and the developing of specific strategies that allowed them to keep the lads away from them. The spatial-affective dynamics of these spaces therefore shaped the students' reactions when encountering lad culture.

So far, I have highlighted how the concept of space has informed by understanding of lad culture and its affective fabric in the thesis. As a major observation in the research, I have summarised the ways space shaped the reproduction of lad culture and the circulation of affect, and consequently, the ways it was perceived and felt by the participants. In what follows, I underline a second observation of the thesis, where I consider the relationship between affect and the ways students took up and negotiated identity politics.

10.2.2 TAKING UP IDENTITY POLITICS

A second consideration of my thesis has been to look at how affect framed the political subjectivities of the students and consequently, their articulation of identity politics. One of the most significant observations was how this identification process differed between the groups. Among the groups, identity politics was engaged with differently, therefore illustrating the contrast in how each constructed their position and political subjectivities. I argue this was underpinned by affect, inasmuch as affective elements shaped the students' understanding of themselves and their perception of lad culture. Below, I document the main differences that were present among the groups' identificatory politics.

In Chapter 7, identity politics was not picked up in a way I might have expected (that is, I expected a stronger political subjectivity due to them being part of a University society for gender equality) to position themselves against lad culture. In fact, it could be argued that, at certain moments in the conversation, the participants in this group flipped politics by rendering women, somehow, and in varying degrees, responsible for some of the misogynistic laddish harassment they faced. Discussions of clothes (e.g. wearing short skirts) and makeup were sometimes framed as provoking lads, or in their words, as "*poking the lad with a stick*". In addition, when discussing the problematic practices lads engaged in during nights out (e.g. pursue of sexual encounters), some of the participants of the group highlighted this was not behaviour only limited to men, as women could also participate in it. This works not only to exempt lads of some of its most problematic behaviours, but also to erase identity politics from their view of lad culture. In this regard, the Gender Equality group appeared as doing politics that fitted within the neoliberal logic of individual responsibility.

I argue that one way of interpreting this could be to explore how affect and identity politics shape each other. With the exception of a member of the group who did contest some of her colleagues' views and expressed feeling threatened by lad culture in different occasions, the group's overall feeling towards lad culture was, to a certain degree, one of normalisation. They did recognise the negative consequences of laddish behaviours, particularly for women, however, they did not articulate how the politics of lad culture are reproduced and the effects it exerts over women and others.

Meanwhile, in Chapter 5, the participants' relation to identity politics was of non-identification. Despite acknowledging some of the difficulties women of colour faced within lad culture, these

conversations were also at times framed by avoidance. While the participants did discuss the racial segregation amongst lads groups, there was a palpable silence of the language of 'racism'. This speaks volumes about the difficulty of elaborating the way sexism, misogyny and racism work together, creating multiple layers of oppression. The apparent obstacle in discussing this and, consequently, in how they engaged in identity politics, could be explicated by looking at how affect framed their relationship with lad culture. Affect shaped the discussions and was expressed in the retelling of the stories. However, the participants managed it by constructing themselves as distant from lad culture and as a result, as mostly unaffected by it. It was this distant presentation to the problematic object that I argue shaped their non-identificatory politics.

Finally, in Chapter 9, the participants' take up of politics was firmly shaped by the affective relation they had established with lad culture. In the discussion, the participants spoke about feeling scared, threatened, anxious and afraid of lad culture. Some of them made explicit their dread, stating living in the context of lad culture made them fear for their lives (see Chapter 9). It was this affective fabric framing their engagement with lad culture that underpinned their political subjectivity. Their position as members of the LGBTQIA+ Student Union society made them a vulnerable group within the context of laddish cultures at HE, inasmuch as lad culture appeared to reproduce heteronormative constructions of gender and sexuality. In this case, the political subjectivity this group voiced was shaped by the negative affective relation they had with lad culture.

10.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

Research on lad culture is still developing, as is research on affect and misogyny. Thus far, no other studies have centred lad culture and affect in order to incorporate an affective focus in their inquiry on laddish behaviours and sense-making of laddish practices. Given the uniqueness of this research and its particular focus on campus-based lad culture with University age-related participants, there is still further research that needs developing on the basis of this study. I particularly foresee further research focusing in-depth on the importance of affect and the social structures of gender, ethnicity and sexuality. This would fit within emergent research that looks at the affective life of neoliberalism. Before I move onto delineating the possible future directions for research within this field, I would like to bring attention to a comment that was repeatedly said to me about this research. Both delegates at conferences and research

participants in this study have expressed the need for research in lad culture to be conducted with men/lads (see also Evans [2010] for an analogous calls). I recognise the importance of this line of research and the need for masculinity research within lad culture. However, that was not the aim of this study, and neither do I see myself embarking on this project in the future. Instead, I see two particular future directions within lad culture research that would further the field by significantly building on the work presented in this thesis.

This thesis offers an understanding of lad culture, misogyny, racism and homophobia through affective lenses. In looking at the affective life of lad culture that framed the analysis, the concept of space emerged, which opened up a discussion on the ways spatial elements shape laddish articulations and reproductions. Considering this, further research on lad culture could be located within the field of human geography, further exploring how particular spatial elements and settings exert influence over how misogyny, racism and homophobia are performed and experienced. An in-depth exploration of space as framing and structuring these practices could provide a significant understanding of how gender relations and human geographies are reciprocally constituted and structured (Dixon and Jones 2006). Such research could usefully explore the ways geographies interact with gender, race and sexuality in reproducing, altering or transforming intersectional power and social hierarchies (Rodó-de-Zárate and Baylina 2018).

A second direction in future research would be expanding further the intersectional nature of research on lad culture, especially in regards to race. As I have mentioned above, this thesis, despite incorporating an intersectional approach, was faced with obstacles concerning specific silences around discussions on race. This silence on race (Mazzei 2007) is rather unsettling, particularly within a feminist intersectional paradigm whose goal is to account for and document difference. And it has been very challenging to try to overcome and examine this silence in the recruitment stage, the group conversations and the analysis process. Further work in this field could explore how lad culture works and is articulated differently within and by people of colour, particularly in the current socio-cultural context where a resurgence of white supremacist discourses are penetrating socio-educational settings (Busby 2018b). Such research could explore how people of colour navigate the potential hostilities of lad culture and how they negotiate their existence in HE environments where their presence is simultaneously celebrated and obstructed (Adams 2018; Busby 2018a). Research that encompassed the

difficult subject of race would open up discussions and produce novel theoretical accounts for the workings of racism in lad culture.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Feeling 'Lad Culture': mapping agency and subjectivity within the context of university 'laddism'

This research aims to explore the construction of subjectivity and negotiation of agency of students at University in relation to 'lad culture' and postfeminist discourses.

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Please tick

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at anytime without giving a reason. ☐
3. I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in confidence ☐
4. I understand that I also have the right to change my mind about participating in the study for a short period after the study has concluded (September 2019). ☐
5. I agree to be recorded as part of the research project ☐
6. I agree to take part in the research project ☐

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APPENDIX 2

Dear Cooperative Inquiry participant,

Thank you for your participation in this research which is conducted Silvia Diaz-Fernandez of the school of Media and Performing Arts. This research aims to explore the construction of subjectivity and negotiation of agency of students at University in relation to 'lad culture' and postfeminist discourses. Your participation is important for the completion of this research and to identify tools that help to tackle misogyny at higher education. If you have any questions about this research please do not hesitate to ask.

The discussion will last approximately 1 hour to 1 hour and a half and themes and questions will focus on 'lad culture' drawing on personal experiences. Please be assured that data collected from the focus group discussion will be confidential and used for academic purposes only. Data will also be coded appropriately and reporting of results will be anonymous. Likely outputs include academic publications.

Before the start of the focus group discussion you will be asked to complete a consent form and at the end of the focus group you will be asked to provide some demographic information and sign to indicate that you have collected your shopping vouchers.

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APPENDIX 3

Participant Information Form

Title: Feeling 'Lad Culture': mapping agency and subjectivity within the context of university 'laddism' postfeminist discourses

Aim & Objectives

The aim of this research is to explore the ways in the cultural phenomenon named 'lad culture' exerts an emotional grab on young students at University suggesting it may have an impact in their psychosocial identity construction and subjectivity.

The objectives are to:

1. Identify the ways in which 'lad culture' permeates through the students' subjectivity.
2. Map the emotions and affects that are (re)produced within the context of 'laddism' at Higher Education.
3. Analyse the data in a reflective way and present the conclusions with participants.
4. Discuss the emotional impact of 'lad culture' in the everyday life of young students.

Why have I been chosen?
As a student at Coventry University student you will participate in the Cooperative Inquiry sessions that are included within the data collection process of the PhD. We want to understand, from a feminist perspective, how 'lad culture' is felt and dealt (or not) with.

Do I have to take part?
No. Participants will not be forced to take part in this research. Participation is entirely voluntary. If you change your mind about taking part in the study you can withdraw at any point during the Cooperative Inquiry sessions.

What happens if I do decide to take part?
If you decide to take part in the research, you will be asked to come along to three sessions of group discussion based on the method of Cooperative Inquiry that will last between 1 hour and 1 hour and a half during the period of three weeks. You may withdraw part way through the sessions if you are uncomfortable with the topics or material required. If you withdraw your responses will not be used in the data analysis.

What are the risks or disadvantages of me taking part?
Participation in the survey may require you to take some time off your studies. However, I can estimate it will only take around 1 hour and a half a week and we can collectively decide the date and time of the meetings so it is convenient for everyone taking part. Being engaged in this project will enhance your understanding of gender (in)equality and feminism within the context of the University.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can decline to answer any question if you feel it is invasive of your personal privacy and it is your right to be withdraw from the sessions at any time. There are no risks to taking part in this research.

What are the benefits of me taking part?
Participation in the cooperative inquiry sessions will enable you to actively engage in the production of feminist theory at a group discussion level and it will make you more aware and understanding of sexist practices and their impact on our everyday life. You could develop an interest in the subject area. Since the cooperative inquiry sessions will be open and non-structured, they open up the possibility of collectively choosing the topics for further discussion and activities to overtake.

Withdrawal options
All participants are free to withdraw from the research at any point during the sessions. You are also free from abandoning the closed Facebook group. If you decide to withdraw all your data and responses will be destroyed and will not be used.

Will my participation and data be kept confidential?
Yes. You are not required to leave your name and any comments you make will be anonymised. Only the Primary Investigator (Silvia Diaz-Fernandez) will have access to the raw data and to the identity of participants. The raw data from the project will only be retained for one month after the completion of the project and publication of the results (September 2019). They will then be destroyed. When the data has been entered into a computer file, access to the file will be password protected.

How will the data be used?
The data responses you provide will be used to understand the emotional impact of 'lad culture' in young student's psychosocial subjectivity construction and behaviour, in order to identify possible ways to tackle misogynistic laddish practices within Higher Education.

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APPENDIX 4

PhD Title – Feeling 'Lad Culture': mapping affect, subjectivity and agency in young HE students in relation to lad culture and overarching postfeminist discourses

Print, Audio and Video Production Consent Form

I, the undersigned, consent to the use of my words, images, images of my work or recordings of my voice being used within Coventry University publications or video case studies. I understand that this may be used for educational, marketing, and/or commercial purposes, and that copyright will reside with Coventry University.

I acknowledge that the quote, image or recording may also be used in, and distributed by, media pertaining to Coventry University's activities other than a printed publication, such as, but not limited to CD-ROM, DVD or the World Wide Web.

Copyright restrictions placed on Coventry University publications and case studies prevent content being sold or used by way of trade without the expressed permission of the University, as copyright holder. Images and recordings may not be edited, amended or re-used without permission from [insert University contact name] on behalf of Coventry University. Personal details of those taking part are not made available to third parties.

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APPENDIX 5

Name	Group	Gender Identity	Sexuality	Race/Ethnicity	Nationality
Anne	1	Cis-female	Bisexual	White	Content removed to assist anonymity of research participants
Rose	1	Cis-female	Heterosexual	White	
Eve	1	Cis-female	Heterosexual	White	
Mark	1	Cis-male	Heterosexual	White	
Joe	1	Cis-male	Heterosexual	White	
Gwen	1	Cis-female	Heterosexual	Asian	
Mary	1	Cis-female	Heterosexual	White	
Liv	2	Cis-female	Heterosexual	Asian	
Emma	2	Cis-female	Heterosexual	Asian	
Ray	2	Cis-male	Heterosexual	Asian	
Tom	3	Cis-male		White	
Lena	3	Non-binary	Pansexual	White	
Farrah	3	Non-binary	Pansexual	White	
Wend	3	Non-binary	Asexual	White	
Bob	3	Trans non-binary		White	
Patt	3	Cis-female	Pansexual	White	
Garry	3	Cis-male	Gay	White	
Dan	3	Transgender man	Pansexual	White	
Kim	3	Cis-female	Lesbian	White	
Jack	3	Trans non-binary	Pansexual	Asian	
Cassie	3	Transgender woman	Heterosexual	White	
Ollie	4	Cis-male	Heterosexual	White	
Keith	4	Cis-male	Heterosexual	White	
Belle	4	Cis-female	Heterosexual	Black	
Tess	4	Cis-female	Heterosexual	White	
Tori	5	Cis-female	Heterosexual	Asian	
Jess	5	Cis-female	Heterosexual	Asian	
Ash	5	Cis-female	Heterosexual	Black	

APPENDIX 6

Ethics document Academic Year 2018/2019

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APPENDIX 7
Ethics certificate Academic Year 2017/2018

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Silvia Diaz Fernandez

Project Title:

Feeling Lad Culture: mapping the affective construction of students' subjectivity in relation to laddism and overarching postfeminist discourses.

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

Date of approval:

16 October 2017

Project Reference Number:

P61754

APPENDIX 8

Ethics document Academic Year 2017/2018

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APPENDIX 9

Ethics certificate Academic Year 2016/2017

Certificate of Ethical Approval

Applicant:

Silvia Diaz Fernandez

Project Title:

Feeling Lad Culture: mapping the affective construction of young women's subjectivity in relation to 'laddism' and overarching postfeminist discourses

This is to certify that the above named applicant has completed the Coventry University Ethical Approval process and their project has been confirmed and approved as Medium Risk

Date of approval:

28 November 2016

Project Reference Number:

P47605

APPENDIX 10

Ethics certificate Academic Year 2016/2017

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